

work to define the metrics of excellence in performance at the same time that we redefine the boundaries of our field—a not insignificant challenge—because if we do not define these metrics it is almost certain that federal agencies will do so for us.

As the scope of our field has expanded, so has Newsline. Less than a decade ago, Newsline was seldom more than a few pages long. Not only have we added a number of features, but now we have the flexibility to include expanded issues, such as the complete proceedings of this year's Molecular Imaging Summit (December), the complete images and text of Dr. Henry Wagner's annual Highlights Lecture (August), and this annual roundup issue. Beginning this month, we are also adding a separate molecular imaging

section to our popular monthly summaries of notable publications from the peer-reviewed literature. One immediate question raised as we categorize our selections is: Which research truly fits into the "molecular" category and which does not? The answer, I suspect, is as much a matter of naming as it is of clear distinctions.

I hope that 2007 brings productivity and prosperity to all Newsline readers, as we work together toward a world in which molecular imaging—or whatever new name it may take in the distant future—speeds a range of techniques and therapies to beneficial clinical applications.

Conrad Nagle, MD
Editor, Newsline

From the SNM President

A Year of Shaping the Future

Over the past year the leadership of SNM has worked diligently with the members of the society to reshape its future. Many actions have brought the society to its defining moment—of bridging nuclear medicine to a new future with molecular imaging and therapy.

The Rise of Molecular Medicine. Nuclear medicine is leading the way in this new field of molecular imaging as it is being joined by—and integrated with—other modalities. Research traditionally performed with nuclear medicine-based tracers is being expanded to involve any kind of tracer attached to a molecule that provides a detectable signal, offering a new generation of imaging tools that could improve patient care—especially when compared with today's conventional diagnostic imaging.

Planning for Tomorrow. For these reasons, SNM leaders developed a 5-year strategic plan and expanded mission: To improve health care by advancing molecular imaging and therapy. In addition, through collaboration with the members of our Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence, the society has also drafted a separate 5-year action plan utilizing a community approach to moving molecular imaging research from bench to bedside. This action plan is supported by the society's 5-year, \$5 million "Bench to Bedside" campaign, which has raised nearly \$3 million in its first year from corporate donors GE Healthcare, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Siemens Medical Solutions USA, IBA Molecular, Philips, and FluoroPharma.

Progress in Defining Molecular Imaging. SNM explored basic research, instrumentation, drug development, clinical issues, and educational needs at its 2006 "Shaping the Future" molecular imaging summit. In publishing the summit's conclusions and recommendations in the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, we reached a milestone in defining molecular imaging.

Supporting MOC Reality. American Board of Medical Specialties recertification programs were expanded and replaced with maintenance of certification (MOC) programs. Nuclear medicine professionals can no longer simply take an exam to renew a certificate; lifelong learning activities must be documented. American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM) MOC requirements take effect this year, requiring all diplomates with time-limited certificates to document necessary competencies in an ongoing process that includes assessing and improving practice performance.



Martin P. Sandler, MD

In anticipation of MOC changes, SNM developed its Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program. Nearly 2 dozen systems-based online modules can help nuclear medicine professionals measure their performance in practice. SNM also offers comprehensive educational programs to meet the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education and ABNM requirements for CT training.

Emphasizing Practice Issues. SNM developed a task force to monitor and respond to issues related to practice standards, including pay for performance, and continues to work with the American Medical Association to influence a gradual pay-for-performance strategy that will improve health care. With the American College of Nuclear Physicians, SNM initiated minimum standards for the credentialing in nuclear medicine of those interpreting PET, PET or SPECT with CT, and cardiovascular CT images. And, the society published the first procedure guideline for tumor imaging with ¹⁸F-FDG.

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Working With Legislators and Regulators. SNM asked Congress to reconsider the deep cuts made in medical imaging services for Medicare beneficiaries as part of the federal Deficit Reduction Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 2005 (DRA) and commented to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services regarding the 2007 rules for the Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System and the Medicare Physician Fee Schedule. Although Congress failed to take action on DRA cuts, members did listen to SNM and other medical societies regarding the looming 5% 2007 Medicare physician payment cut. Before adjourning, Congress voted to freeze the 2007 physician payment cut at the 2006 rate. SNM is continuing its work to restore federal funding for basic science research in nuclear medicine (in light of a Department of Energy/National Institutes of Health study that is examining the importance of such research). We will continue to participate in discussions about evolving Food and Drug Administration guidelines for the review and approval of radiopharmaceuticals; interact more with industry representatives to promote therapeutic drug devel-

opment, the use of novel molecular therapeutics, and the development of new diagnostics; and continue our role with the National Oncologic PET Registry. In collaboration with other associations, SNM submitted public comments in response to the proposed U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission rulemaking on naturally occurring and accelerator-produced radioactive material.

Continuing a Research-Rich Tradition. *JNM* and *JNMT* have both moved to an open access publishing model and will soon publish ahead of print in a move designed to bring research to you faster. *JNM* publishes outstanding research in diverse topics, including consensus recommendations for using PET with ^{18}F -FDG in National Cancer Institute Trials and last month's "PET/CT in Cancer Patient Management" supplement.

We know that the future has a way of arriving unannounced; however, from this brief look at the year's past activities, you can see that SNM has planned intelligently to bridge nuclear medicine to a future with molecular imaging and therapy.

Martin P. Sandler, MD
President, SNM

From the SNMTS President

Preparing Technologists for Tomorrow

By planning strategically—and steering the direction of education, training, and certification efforts—the SNM Technologist Section spent this past year continuing to prepare individuals and the profession for the future.

Developing a Strategic Plan. The futures of SNMTS and SNM remain integrally linked, and we are both charting a strategic direction to improve health care by advancing molecular imaging and therapy. SNMTS leaders added this mission as our tagline and began scripting a revised strategic plan last summer. Our future includes the important work we do in nuclear medicine and recognizes that advances in molecular biology, molecular medicine, and medical imaging expand the role of nuclear medicine professionals. SNMTS wants to emphasize a new strategic direction in the advocacy, research, training, and clinical practice of molecular imaging. We have a draft document with the following 5 goals: SNMTS will be the essential professional organization, offering necessary programs and services in an expanding field; stand as the ultimate resource for knowledge, information, and education in the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging; continue to be inclusive to those with different thoughts and roles; work to raise awareness of the impact of emerging

technology; and remain responsive, embracing new developments and keeping pace with the rapid changes in the field.

Supporting SNMTS Direction. A survey that was recently conducted for SNMTS reflects that nuclear medicine technologists are keenly aware of how quickly the profession is changing. We know that the introduction of new imaging technologies results in changing responsibilities and that we are seeing an evolution in medical imaging, the increasing importance of fusion imaging technologies, and the shift of nuclear medicine practice toward cardiologists, oncologists, and other specialists.

According to the study, major transformations in nuclear medicine are coming, and we were advised to pursue licensure in all states to serve the needs—and protect the safety—of the public. In addition, technologists were told to promote standardized, legislated legal scope of practice; augment the knowledge base and skill sets to include fusion imaging with the latest technologies; track closely the work



D. Scott Holbrook,
CNMT, PET, FSNMTS

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