



Policy and Regulatory News from SNM, Capitol Hill, and Beyond

SNM Radiopharmaceutical Cost Survey

The future of nuclear medicine is in jeopardy because of inadequate reimbursement for higher-priced, newer, and more complex radiopharmaceuticals. SNM will be conducting a survey on radiopharmaceutical costs in June and July to appropriately address this concern. The objective of the survey is to better understand the actual acquisition cost of all radiopharmaceuticals in the office, independent diagnostic testing facilities, and hospital settings, under all circumstances—ranging from purchasing a single unit dose from a central nuclear pharmacy to manufacturing the radiopharmaceutical “in-house” (including vial preparation or cyclotron production/manufacturing of radiopharmaceuticals on site). The results of this survey will be essential to the formulation of future responses to the 2008 Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services proposed and final rules.

The SNM Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs staff is asking *JNM* readers to encourage colleagues and other knowledgeable individuals to thoroughly and accurately complete the radiopharmaceutical cost survey. The more robust the data we obtain, the better we can form a credible analysis.

Senate Access to Medicare Imaging Act of 2007

U.S. Senators Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) introduced the Access to Medicare Imaging Act of 2007 (S 1338) on May 8. The bill is bipartisan legislation calling for a 2-year moratorium of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 imaging cuts that went into effect on January 1. During the 2-year moratorium, the Government Accountability Office would analyze the effects of the Medicare cuts on patients in need of imaging procedures. The House version of the bill (HR 1293) was introduced in March in the U.S. House of Representatives by Representatives Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY), Joseph Pitts (R-PA), and Gene Green (D-TX) and has the support of 122 cosponsors (at this writing).

SNM continues to work with the Access to Medical Imaging Coalition in efforts to delay further implementation of the DRA legislation until the effects can be studied. To take action in support of this legislation, please visit the SNM-American College of Nuclear Physicians online legislative action center (<http://capwiz.com/snm/home>).

President Bush Nominates New NRC Commissioner

President George W. Bush nominated Kristine L. Svinicki of Virginia to a 5-year term on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). Svinicki succeeds commissioner Jeffrey S.

Merrifield, whose term ended in June. Before the nomination, Svinicki was a senior policy advisor for Senator Larry Craig (R-ID). Earlier in her career, she served as a nuclear engineer in the office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management at the Department of Energy. She received her bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and started her career as an energy engineer for the State of Wisconsin's Public Service Commission in the Division of Energy Planning & Programs.



Hugh Cannon
Director of Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs, SNM

NRC Approves Final NARM Rule

The NRC approved the final rule on naturally occurring and accelerator-produced radioactive material (NARM) by a vote of 5-0 on May 14 (see Newsbriefs). The SNM participated with the NRC throughout the public NARM rulemaking process. The comments jointly submitted by SNM, the American College of Radiology, and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology are available on the SNM Web site at www.snm.org

SNM and AMA Conduct Physician Practice Information Survey

For the first time in nearly a decade, SNM, the American Medical Association (AMA), and more than 70 other medical specialty societies are working together to coordinate a comprehensive multispecialty survey of America's physician practices. The purpose of the Physician Practice Information Survey is to collect current information on physician practice characteristics in order to positively influence national decision makers and further develop and refine SNM and AMA policy. Thousands of practices representing almost all physician specialties will be surveyed to ensure accurate and fair representation. This survey is unique in that it will explore the clinical and business sides of practice. It is important for the nation's policymakers to learn what is truly involved in running a practice that can provide patients with high-quality care in a sustainable way.

Hugh Cannon
Director of Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs, SNM