

Beginning Again—Again

Every beginning has its own built-in excitement and expectations. Beginning my term as SNM TS president is no exception. To be honest, when I look back at how far the field of nuclear medicine has grown and developed, when I see how far the Technologist Section has come over the years and where it is headed, and when I consider SNM's mission of advancing molecular imaging and therapy, I feel a sense of challenge as well.

Fortunately, beginning again does not have to mean starting over. To guard against that and to ensure that we continue to move forward, SNM TS adopted a 5-year strategic plan at the 2007 SNM Annual Meeting. The goals included in that plan are ambitious but achievable, and many are already on the way to being met. Briefly, they state that SNM TS will be:

- The indispensable **resource in promoting and educating in knowledge exchange, training, and networking** for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging and therapy;
- A powerful **advocate** for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging therapy that will promote the **highest standard of patient care**;
- A leader in **educational and credentialing/licensing efforts** for imaging specialists in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging and therapy; and
- A society that **positions technologists** within the fields of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging and therapy.

These are strong position statements requiring a strong commitment from the Technologist Section's membership. They can be accomplished, however, if we are willing to challenge ourselves to reach for greater heights by taking new classes (and reporting those hours); joining local, state, and/or national chapters; attending meetings such as SNM's Mid-winter Educational Symposium and Annual Meeting; and advocating for enforceable standards for all those practicing nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. It will require using every resource at hand—and there are several—to arm ourselves with new knowledge, skills, and experiences. Our members understand that staying up-to-date on the latest research, training, and health regulatory issues is good not only for their own careers and the medical profession in general but also for patients.

SNM TS will continue to lead the way in educational and training programs that equip both beginning and experienced molecular imaging/nuclear medicine professionals. For the former, a final draft of the entry-level professional curriculum was completed at this year's Annual Meeting, development of a document delineating the essential functions

of a nuclear medicine technologist has been planned, and a recommendation for education in PET/CT at the undergraduate level has been proposed in order to obtain grant funds so that interested facilities can integrate these classes into their programs.

For those already in the field, the title and position of Nuclear Medicine Advanced Associate was launched at a reception during SNM's 55th Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, celebrating the creation of the position and development of the attendant curriculum.

Dedication to increasing understanding of molecular imaging throughout the medical community and with the public means our members will be out in front on advocacy issues, such as our effort to ensure that the Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence (CARE) in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy bill is passed this year with sufficient enforcement muscle. The bill is due to come before the Senate for mark-up later this year.

To ensure that youthful energy and talent do not go unrecognized, we established a leadership academy to which young professionals are invited to learn leadership skills and receive communication training. SNM TS leadership has begun to visit several local professional chapters to hear about concerns on a variety of topics. We hope that by keeping our ear to the ground on a local level, we will better serve membership across the country.

In addition to the SNM TS strategic plan, we are fully on board with the overall goals and mission of SNM. Because molecular imaging is a vital element of today's medical practice and adds an additional dimension to diagnosis that can change the way common and devastating diseases are understood and treated, it is imperative that our members continue to enhance skills and knowledge; advocate for enforcement of professional standards at the local, state, and federal levels; stay updated on industry and professional changes; and get involved with colleagues, both locally and nationally.

Adopting goals and seeing them through to completion are 2 different things, and that is where the sense of challenge I mentioned earlier comes in. It is also where I invite you to join me as we enter the second year of the SNM TS strategic plan and roll up our sleeves and work to advance our mission. The path is clear. The journey is exciting. The destination will be well worth the effort.



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