

agencies, is working to address many of these challenges. As experience in 2008 clearly demonstrated, we cannot predict what 2009 will hold but can continue to work together to do our best to advance nuclear and molecular imaging, expand its horizons, and enhance the lives of the countless patients affected by its benefits.

I hope that 2009 brings productivity and its own rewards to all Newsline readers, whatever their fields of endeavor.

*Conrad Nagle, MD
Editor, Newsline*

We Have Seen the Future—and It Is Now

In June this year, many of us will attend SNM's 56th Annual Meeting in Toronto, Canada, where we will spend several days polishing our professional knowledge and benefiting from the latest research in molecular imaging and nuclear medicine.

Consider that statement for a moment: For 56 y, SNM has held an annual meeting where the best and brightest scientists, physicians, and technologists in the field have gathered to share their expertise and knowledge.

Why? Because SNM is dedicated to advancing molecular imaging and therapy, and the best way to do this is by generously reporting on research that may have been decades in development. We recognize the importance of equipping colleagues—particularly young professionals—with the results of our labor, as well as the tools and methods necessary to achieve these results.

Other societies and organizations are equally dedicated to ensuring that current and future practitioners are equipped, instructed—and inspired—to carry on this great work. Last fall, the American Society of Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO) held the Translational Advances in Radiation Oncology and Cancer Imaging Symposium, an educational event at which SNM provided expertise in molecular imaging.

This was the second symposium on which SNM has partnered with ASTRO. Our involvement was considerable at every level. We participated in abstract review and selection, nominated promising young researchers from both of our communities for travel awards, and jointly developed the scientific program. The growing importance of molecular imaging and therapy in radiation oncology was underscored both by our involvement and by the increasing and constructive collaboration between our societies. The objectives of the symposium were to advance translational research in radiation oncology and imaging, provide attendees with practical information on how to review designs of clinical trials, explain how research findings are introduced into the clinic, and enhance the clinical applicability of translational research. This is precisely the information needed by young professionals as they ponder possible directions for their career paths.

Both of our societies recognize the need to continue to develop a community of translational researchers within the

field and to foster opportunities for continued research with clinicians, biologists, and radiologists. Toward that end, this symposium offered an opportunity to increase knowledge of basic science principles used in current protocols and learn about new techniques that will impact translational research now and in the near future.

Building on the success of our continuing education seminar at the 2007 ASTRO meeting in Los Angeles, CA, we furthered this collaboration at ASTRO's 2008 meeting in Boston, MA. The continuing education seminar was well attended and also very highly regarded. A similar seminar is planned for SNM's Mid-Winter Educational Symposium in Clearwater, FL, on Saturday, February 7; senior members of ASTRO will participate in this seminar. The joint SNM/ASTRO educational initiative is poised to grow significantly as our organizations continue to collaborate.

By providing the next generation of scientists, physicians, and technologists an opportunity to meet today's researchers and hear them discuss the most recent advances in understanding, diagnosing, and treating cancer during the many educational and scientific sessions at the symposia and annual meetings, we are guaranteeing that our own work will be carried forth in ways we could have only imagined a few years ago.

Both ASTRO and SNM recognize molecular imaging's ability to deliver on the promise of personalized medicine by providing patient-specific information that allows tailored treatment of disease. Because molecular imaging can show a precise level of detail that provides new information for diagnosis, it is key to the development of radiation therapy protocols that will optimize the benefits for the patient. It is, therefore, another piece of knowledge that future practitioners must have. Practitioners in the field today need to encourage our younger colleagues to pursue every opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills in this vital research area.

The next time you receive information about an upcoming scientific meeting, think about encouraging 1 or 2 of your



**Robert W. Atcher, PhD,
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top residents, colleagues, or other young professionals to attend. The vitality and health of our field depends on our ability to translate findings into new clinical applications that can benefit our patients.

Together, we can develop a cadre of researchers—both young and old—whose work—whether in the lab or in the

clinic—will unlock tomorrow's mysteries and continue to propel molecular imaging and therapy into the future.

*Robert W. Atcher, PhD, MBA
President, SNM*

From the SNMTS President

It seems as though each year goes a little more quickly than the last, and 2008 was no exception. Last year was a true testament for what is in store for SNMTS—exciting new initiatives that are breaking the mold for the nuclear medicine technologist.

Our most notable and promising accomplishments in 2008 were in the area of education. The position and title of nuclear medicine advanced associate (NMAA) were approved by the SNM Board of Directors, opening the door for the first NMAA program. The first program—a consortium between the University of Arkansas, St. Louis University, and the University of Missouri, Columbia—received final approval from the Arkansas Department of Education in November 2008, with the first class beginning in fall 2009. This program will enable highly capable and motivated professionals to achieve advanced degrees and increase their clinical responsibilities. In addition to the NMAA, we have developed a new, more comprehensive bachelor of science entry-level curriculum to ensure that those beginning their education in nuclear medicine are better prepared. The new curriculum now includes CT, MR, and molecular imaging modalities.

The SNMTS Executive Board adopted the SNMTS Continuing Education Strategic Plan during its 2008 spring meeting. This plan will help to ensure that SNMTS is leading the industry in providing much-needed education material for the technologist. Also introduced in 2008 were the educational resources and board reviews necessary for preparing for the PET and nuclear cardiology certification exams.

After much anticipation, in spring 2008 the SNMTS and the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) launched Verification of Involvement in Continuing Education (VOICE) credit sharing. An e-mail blast was sent to all SNMTS members announcing this new member benefit. Those who sign up must know their NMTCB number and SNM member number. By signing up, the SNMTS will transmit continuing education credit data directly to the NMTCB, ensuring that credit is reported accurately and on time. The SNMTS will work with the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists over the next year to develop a similar program.

Over the past 2 y, SNMTS has strengthened its international relationships. For the 2008 Annual Meeting, we

extended the SNMTS member rates to technologist members of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM). This member extension rate will continue for SNM's 2009 Mid-Winter and Annual meetings. SNMTS will extend its member rate to all Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists (CAMRT) members beginning in June 2009.



**Mark Wallenmeyer,
MBA, CNMT, RT(N)**

The SNMTS leadership also traveled to the South African Society of Nuclear Medicine (SASN) and EANM meetings. The leadership have received invitations to and will be attending the 2009 British Society of Nuclear Medicine (BSNM) and CAMRT meetings. At SNM's upcoming annual meeting in Toronto, Canada, June 13–17, we will be hosting an international session for technologists—a panel discussion addressing challenges from around the world, such as regulatory issues and educational models. Representatives from EANM, CAMRT, SASNM, BSNM, and the Australian/New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine have been invited to attend and participate in the discussion. The continued collaboration with our sister international organizations will help the nuclear medicine community worldwide.

The SNMTS Advocacy Committee has been working diligently to ensure passage of the consistency, accuracy, responsibility, and excellence (CARE) legislation. Although it has been met with some success, we were disappointed that the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions neglected to include a critical section enforcing credentialing standards. Another huge success was the restoration of \$17.5 million to the Department of Energy Basic Nuclear Medicine Research Fund, down from a budget of \$34 million prior to 2006, but still a large jump from previous discussion. We will continue to press for sufficient funding to ensure that the United States remains the leader in nuclear medicine research and therapy. SNMTS's State Health Policy Liaisons have been renamed "Key Advocates," because they will work to increase community action on legislative issues related to molecular imaging through advocacy assignments, e-mail updates, and other activities. More recently, SNMTS has been working at the grassroots