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The Commission on Health Care Practice

The SNM Commission on Health Care Practice was newly formed last year to oversee and coordinate the work of several existing SNM committees dealing with issues important to nuclear medicine professionals. The Practice Standards, Procedure Standards, Coding and Reimbursement, and Quality Assurance committees are included in this commission. Much of the work of the commission in 2008 involved the efforts of SNM to create criteria for Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) pay-for-performance (PFP) incentives. These incentives currently provide a small supplemental payment for those physicians who meet criteria accepted by CMS, and it is likely that PFP will become increasingly important in the future. The task of identifying relevant PFP criteria is difficult, because hospital-based specialties, such as nuclear medicine, radiology, and pathology, do not easily fit into the typical PFP categories of demonstrated accomplishment. Development of appropriate criteria must go through

multispecialty committees of the American Medical Association (AMA) or the National Quality Forum before being accepted by CMS. It is extremely important for SNM to maintain its membership as a specialty society in the AMA if we are to continue to have input into this process. Unless we have a certain percentage of our physician members who are also members of the AMA—a percentage that we do not have at present—we may lose our AMA delegates and thus our voice in the process.

Integral to the PFP initiative is the development of appropriate practice standards. Nuclear medicine, by its nature, involves multiple specialties. In addition to imaging societies, such as the American College of Radiology (ACR),



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clinical specialties such as oncology and cardiology have an influence in the development of appropriateness criteria, practice standards, and PFP criteria. The commission has been working to increase our contacts with appropriate specialty societies to develop joint standards that are more likely to be generally accepted. Although SNM is the major society representing nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, it is dwarfed by the membership and resources of groups like the ACR and the American College of Cardiology, and we need to work together wherever possible to further our goals.

Another area that significantly affects nuclear medicine is Medicare reimbursement. New CMS regulations, bundling radiopharmaceuticals into the cost of procedures, have significant adverse effects on reimbursement. The SNM Coding and Reimbursement Committee and Ambulatory Payment Classification Task Force worked actively in 2008 to ensure that the cost of radiopharmaceuticals is accurately recorded so that proper reimbursement is made.

The Quality Assurance Committee, whose major role has been the development of phantoms for the Veterans Affairs

quality assurance program, continues to do an excellent job. Last year a thyroid phantom was developed and distributed. This year a cardiac perfusion SPECT phantom will be distributed. A new role for the committee this year is the development of a PET phantom for use by the SNM Clinical Trials Network to ensure reproducibility between different sites.

As we enter the new year, with a new administration in Washington, DC, and in the midst of a financial crisis, it is important that SNM continue its work representing nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. Change is inevitable, and we must maintain our position as a credible advocate to have an influence in the process. The SNM Commission on Health Care Practice and the committees under it are doing an excellent job of meeting these challenges.

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From the SNM Commission on Education

The Commission on Education was formed in June 2008 in an effort to streamline the governance process for SNM. The commission now includes 5 parts: (1) the Commission on Education itself, which has charges similar to those of the previous Committee on Education; (2) the Scientific Program Committee; (3) the Continuing Education Committee; (4) the Publications Committee; and (5) the Young Professionals Committee (YPC).

Commission on Education: The first year of the 2008–2010 Education Strategic Plan was quite successful. The commission completed almost all of its Year 1 action items and began planning and developing Year 2 action items. The focus during the past year was on 4 key areas: (1) continuing to develop education activities targeted to assist physicians in meeting maintenance of certification (MOC) requirements; (2) developing policies and procedures to meet the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) Revised Criteria; (3) expanding education activities in the area of CT; (4) planning next steps in reaching the SNM's Entry-Level Technologist initiative; and (5) establishing the Nuclear Medicine Advanced Associate (NMAA) position.

The SNM Learning Center (<http://interactive.snm.org/index.cfm?PageID=939>) houses all online education activities. It also includes information available on DVDs and CDs, as well as information on all live workshops and symposia. SNM's premier education activity, the Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program (LLSAP), can be found in the Learning Center. Because MOC continues to

be a primary focus for SNM, new modules continue to be developed, offering state-of-the-art education to members seeking self-assessment module (SAM) credits to fulfill MOC Part II requirements or to earn continuing education credits using our virtual tool.

In addition to LLSAP, the Learning Center offers interactive cases in diagnostic CT and PET/CT. These cases provide Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine-compliant datasets so that participants can experience education in a virtual setting. These cases were developed to assist physicians in meeting the 500-CT or 150-PET/CT case recommendations published by both SNM and the American College of Radiology (ACR) in 2005. Live CT Case Review Workshops have been added to the slate of education offerings to provide other venues for meeting the CT case reading recommendation. Two of the live CT Case Review Workshops are available via the SNM Online Lectures.

SNM now offers more than 100 online lectures on a wide range of topics. Lectures and lecture series are available



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