

SNM Takes International Spotlight During Global Isotope Crisis

This year's Annual Meeting in Toronto brought national and international visibility to molecular imaging and nuclear medicine. Unprecedented public interest in the worldwide isotope shortage catapulted SNM's members and research into the spotlight. SNM's key messages about the value of molecular imaging and therapy reached referring physicians, policy makers, and other influential audiences.

More than 5,800 people from across the nuclear medicine and molecular imaging communities attended this year's Annual Meeting, where they were able to see first-hand a number of "firsts." The number of journalists attending the annual press conference was unprecedented. The amount of media coverage of SNM far surpassed previous benchmarks. For the first time, SNM made the press conference available to reporters by phone and streaming video. The result is amplified consciousness of the critical role of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging to patients. As critical legislation, such as the Health Care Reform Bill, takes shape in the United States, continually underscoring the value of new imaging techniques and therapies will advance the profession and contribute to improved health care for generations to come. In-depth articles about categorical seminars, scientific research, and honors and awards presented at this year's Annual Meeting are included in this issue of *Newsline*.

When SNM began planning the 2009 Annual Meeting years ago, the society had no way of predicting the current isotope shortage or its severity. This is truly a critical issue that is affecting all of our members and the patients we serve. During the meeting, leadership convened a series of in-depth, in-person meetings that brought together multiple stakeholders to plan a course of action on the issue, including high-level officials from the Australian, Canadian, and European societies of nuclear medicine and others concerned about the increasing severity of the isotope shortage. Canada's Minister of Health, Leona Aglukkaq, came to the Annual Meeting with her aides specifically to meet with SNM leadership. During this meeting, she appointed SNM Past President Alexander McEwan, MD, as a special advisor to the minister on isotopes. Later in the week, SNM leadership met with Health Canada (Canada's national public health agency) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. As the Annual Meeting wrapped up, SNM leadership attended, by invitation, a 2-d session

that brought together the U.S. Departments of Energy and Health and Human Services and members of the Canadian government—including Canada's natural resources minister, Lisa Raitt—and other representatives of the international community.

While these meetings were taking place, the media took special note of the isotope shortage and turned to SNM for expertise. As the Annual Meeting got underway, Canada announced plans to stop producing isotopes by 2016, bringing nuclear medicine to the forefront of the health care debate. As a result, SNM leaders were interviewed on numerous television and radio shows that reached audiences in Canada, the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. The SNM press conference, held on June 15, was the apex of nearly a month of intensive media inquiries and outreach, with a room crammed with reporters and cameras and more correspondents dialing into video and audio coverage. Articles in top daily newspapers, such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, and coverage by international wire services, including Reuters and United Press International, brought research presented at SNM's Annual Meeting to international audiences. Trade press representatives who traditionally cover the Annual Meeting wrote not only about the research but also about the flurry of interest from international press who generally do not cover the field. Indeed, awareness of molecular imaging and nuclear medicine has permeated the mass media—bringing greater visibility to the field, to the society, and to our key messages: nuclear medicine is safe, effective, and vital to the effective diagnosis and treatment of patients with cancer, heart disease, and other deadly conditions.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thanks to Frederic Fahey, DSc, who has served as SNM's Scientific Program Committee Chair for the past 3 y. During this time, under his excellent leadership, SNM's Annual Meeting has both grown and matured, becoming the world's preeminent meeting on molecular imaging and therapy. The number and quality of abstracts submitted for consideration at SNM's Mid-Winter Educational Symposium and Annual Meeting have grown

(Continued on page 34N)



Virginia Pappas, CEO, CAE

patients and staff are likely to seek advice about the efficacy of this and similar products.

PR Newswire

Iran's Research Institute for Nuclear Medicine

An article on SPECT and PET imaging in the July issue of *Newsline (J Nucl Med. 2009;50: 16N–18N)* failed to include a line indicating that authors Gholamrezanezhad and Mirpour are part of the Research Institute for Nuclear Medicine (RINM; Teheran, Iran). The first nuclear med-

icine center in Iran, the RINM was founded in 1967 and has focused for more than 4 decades on educational, research, diagnostic, and therapeutic activities. The country's first nuclear medicine training department was established there in 1981. More than 90% of nuclear medicine physicians practicing in the 130 nuclear medicine centers in Iran completed their residency training at RINM. The *Iranian Journal of Nuclear Medicine* is published at the institute. Nuclear medicine activities there include diagnostic imaging procedures, in vitro and laboratory studies, and therapeutic inter-

ventions. More than 90% of Iran's radioiodine treatments for thyroid cancer are performed in the institute's treatment ward. Faculty at the RINM will install the country's first PET/CT unit in the near future. The RINM was named in 2008 as a "Center of Excellence" in nuclear medicine by Iran's Center of Medical Education Studies and Development, part of the Deputy Ministry for Education, Ministry of Health and Medical Education. The RINM Web site is available at: <http://rinm.tums.ac.ir>.

*Research Institute for Nuclear Medicine
Teheran, Iran*

(Continued from page 29N)

significantly. This year SNM received a record number of abstracts from researchers around the world who wished to share their research with other leaders in their field. We are confident that the quality of SNM's education programs will continue to flourish as Peter Herscovitch, MD, takes the helm for the next 3 y.

Thank you to all of our members and exhibitors for an excellent Annual Meeting. We are grateful for your continued support—and pledge to advance the field through leadership, advocacy, and education.

Virginia Pappas, CEO, CAE