

Embracing the Challenges Ahead—Together

Over the years, SNM has established itself as a respected authority on molecular imaging issues. Our efforts to raise awareness about the benefits of nuclear medicine have contributed greatly to the profession's growth and prosperity. Despite this success, nuclear medicine professionals will continue to be tested by several complex challenges in the coming months.

A medical isotope shortage that has been building for years is threatening to become a full-fledged crisis. In addition, efforts to reform health care will likely continue to take center stage on the national agenda. SNM's proactive leadership in proposing solutions and building consensus among key constituencies will be essential to ensuring that our profession is heard on these critical issues.

Our work in these areas will remain a top priority in the next year. At the same time, SNM's efforts to build coalitions and reach broad audiences will also meet another important goal: enhancing SNM's reputation as the authoritative source on molecular imaging and nuclear medicine among decision makers and the general public.

SNM's proactive leadership on the isotope crisis at this year's Annual Meeting in Toronto is a perfect example of how well these goals mesh. The closing of the Chalk River facility in Ontario, Canada—a major supplier of ^{99}Mo —only weeks before the meeting provided a unique opportunity to raise awareness—not only about maintaining adequate isotope supplies but also about the importance of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging procedures to millions of patients with life-threatening conditions.

Rather than simply commenting on the issues, SNM established itself as a leader by developing a Medical Isotope Communiqué that presents a specific call to action. The Annual Meeting press conference prominently featured the communiqué, and SNM leaders participated in dozens of media interviews. As a result, SNM's views on the isotope crisis were widely covered not only by the Canadian press but also by major U.S. outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *USA TODAY*.

The success of that effort also raised awareness about an issue that has been a top priority for SNM for years: the importance of developing domestic sources of ^{99}Mo . Toward that end, SNM recently formed a coalition with 8 other professional organizations to propose specific solutions to maintain U.S. supplies of isotopes. Within days, a bill was introduced into Congress addressing these issues. SNM will continue to lead the way on this critical need in the coming months.

Being a full participant in efforts to reform the nation's health care system is also at the top of SNM's list of

priorities for the coming year. Debate on significant reform proposals contained in multiple versions of legislation is underway in Washington, DC, and across the country. Any legislation that is enacted will likely have a major impact on the nuclear medicine community.

SNM will be working hard to ensure that your concerns about health care reform are addressed.

Those efforts are being helped tremendously by SNM's Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE). One of MICoE's top goals for the year is to build productive working relationships with several critical stakeholders in health care, including the U.S. Congress and a broad array of professional organizations, patient advocacy groups, government agencies, and other stakeholders, in order to identify areas of shared interest, build consensus, and strengthen SNM's presence with these key players. This outreach will no doubt pave the way for SNM to establish its place at the negotiating table for health care reform legislation. In addition, SNM's Government Relations Committee, led by past-president Robert W. Atcher, PhD, MBA, has met with SNM leadership to flesh out priorities and positions on critical issues. As debate on legislation continues, look to SNM to ensure that the ideas of the nuclear medicine community are being heard.

Fortunately, "being heard" has become a little bit easier these days, thanks to SNM's successful utilization of an array of online social networking tools. In a first among professional organizations, SNM staged a "Virtual March" on Washington to elevate awareness among policy makers on Capitol Hill about the value of molecular imaging and to ensure that patients have access to the safest and most promising health care innovations. Hundreds of physicians, technologists, researchers, and patients participated in the march to show support for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. Interested individuals can still join the march at www.mimarchforhealth.org. This year, SNM will build on this success and continue to enhance its presence on Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other Web 2.0 channels.

In addition to addressing the challenges of the isotope supply crisis and health care reform, we are also looking at how to move molecular imaging and nuclear medicine forward. A major effort in this regard is the development of the Clinical Trials Network. The network will ensure



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MI Grants Fuel Advances in Molecular Imaging Research

The Grants and Awards Task Force oversees SNM's Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) program to encourage innovation and research in molecular imaging. This year 2 major research grants, funded by SNM's Education and Research Foundation, and 3 abstract awards, funded by the MICoE, were presented to recognize and support the work of promising young researchers.

The Molecular Imaging Research Grant for Junior Medical Faculty was presented to Laura L. Horky, MD, PhD, of Brigham and Women's Hospital (Boston, MA) to support her research using ^{18}F -FLT PET and ^{18}F -FET PET for early assessment of glioblastoma multiforme—the most common and aggressive type of brain tumor. This grant provides \$100,000 over 2 y to support 1 junior faculty member in an academic research setting engaging in molecular imaging research for diagnostic or therapeutic applications.

The Postdoctoral Molecular Imaging Scholar Grant was presented to Changqing Li, PhD, of the University of California, Davis, to support research into the simultaneous use of PET and optical imaging, which holds promise for advancing understanding of the cellular and molecular mechanisms of certain diseases. This award provides \$60,000 over 2 y in support of a postdoctoral fellow to promote integration of molecular imaging into his or her research activity.

Three 2009 SNM Molecular Imaging Young Investigator Awards were presented by MICoE President Henry VanBrocklin, PhD, at the MICoE business meeting on July 15 at the SNM Annual Meeting in Toronto.

Jolanta Kunikowska of the Medical University of Warsaw (Poland) was awarded first place and \$1,000 for her abstract, "Clinical results of PRRT with ^{90}Y -DOTATATE and $^{90}\text{Y}/^{177}\text{Lu}$ -DOTATATE: What is better for therapy?" Takahiro Higuchi, MD, PhD, of Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD) received second place and a \$500 award for "Assessment of regional myocardial angiotensin II receptor upregulation after myocardial infarction by PET." Antti Saraste, MD, PhD, Technical University of Munich (Germany) received a \$250 award for " ^{18}F -Galacto-RGD detects anti-inflammatory effect of dietary intervention on mouse atherosclerotic lesions."

The MICoE Grants and Awards Task Force congratulates these award winners, whose research goals are to create new tools and methodologies for understanding diseases at their most fundamental cellular and molecular levels. The hope is that by supporting this type of research, MICoE will facilitate developments toward such ambitious goals as identifying and treating illness before it causes symptoms, tailoring therapy to each patient's specific disease profile, and curing the most intractable diseases. These are exciting and promising times for molecular imaging, but difficult challenges are ahead.

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standardization of imaging in clinical trials and should lead to an expansion of our methodology in assessing response to therapy, particularly in early-phase clinical trials. It should also help speed the approval of new radiopharmaceuticals.

The year ahead will surely bring many challenges to the practice of nuclear medicine. SNM's strategic plan should

be viewed as a roadmap that can help lead the profession to continued success. With your help, SNM will be able to build on past accomplishments and ensure that molecular imaging and nuclear medicine flourish well into the future.

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