

## The Next 5 Years

**S**NM's strong foundation in nuclear medicine and our constant pursuit of new developments in molecular imaging have allowed us to become leaders in the field. SNM was founded by visionaries who were excited about nuclear medicine and recognized its promise as a key component in detecting and managing disease. Now, more than 56 y later, SNM is the world's largest scientific organization dedicated to nuclear medicine and therapy; moreover, the society has gained prominence as a leader in the field of molecular imaging.

Later this month, SNM's board of directors will meet to discuss a new strategic plan as a roadmap to guide SNM through the next 5 y. With serving the current and future needs and interests of our members as our top priority, SNM will look at how best to maintain its core strengths in traditional nuclear medicine while also embracing new and progressive areas of molecular imaging and synthesizing them into all aspects of the society's strategy and practice.

SNM formed its Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence (MICoE) 4 y ago to focus expert attention on education, clinical trials, research, and advocacy in additional core research areas that SNM is assimilating into its scope. These subject matter experts have provided guidance to the society to become a critical resource for physicians, technologists, researchers, clinicians, and scientists as they advance the direction and practice of molecular imaging and therapy.

For example, SNM is actively supporting clinical trials using new molecular imaging agents, such as fluorothymidine and fluoromisonidazole. These agents have the potential to advance not only medical imaging but also targeted therapeutics, which are quickly entering into the practice of medicine. By focusing on translational research and technologies, we can better treat patients and advance the field. Through in vitro testing, animal studies, early-phase clinical trials, and addressing issues of regulatory compli-

ance, we can ensure the efficacy of a technique before it is tested in a clinical setting and accelerate the transition of new agents into clinical use.

Molecular imaging is a diverse field that presents many opportunities for new discoveries and applications. One area that has become increasingly important is optical imaging. An example of this approach, which is nearing clinical applicability, is fluorescent lymphatic mapping, similar to the  $^{99m}\text{Tc}$ -sulfur colloid technique—a study that has existed in nuclear medicine for a long time. The optical technique will likely work with an infrared light source and special goggles. Researchers and clinicians should be able to directly visualize the lymphatic channels and lymph nodes in real time. Eva M. Sevick, PhD, a member of SNM's MICoE board of directors and chair of molecular medicine at the University of Texas Health Science Center's Brown Institute of Molecular Medicine (Houston), is one of the researchers leading the field in this application of optical imaging.

SNM is a mature association, but its age and experience are supplemented by vitality, enthusiasm, and a thorough understanding of the changing and developing nature of medical imaging. As a society, we are dedicated to increasing understanding and sound practice of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging among the medical community and the public. This is an exciting and important time to practice medicine, and we look forward to guiding the direction of the field as new technologies emerge and today's research becomes a standard part of clinical care.



**Michael M. Graham, PhD, MD**

*Michael M. Graham, PhD, MD*  
SNM President