

Reaching Outside of Our Community

Promoting collaboration with referring physicians and patient advocacy groups is one of SNM's top priorities. By increasing referring physicians' understanding of the current value and future promise of nuclear and molecular imaging, we can help ensure patients receive the best and most appropriate care. By increasing patient advocacy groups' awareness about our specialty, we can help prepare them to be powerful allies for maintaining and expanding access to nuclear and molecular imaging procedures.

SNM has made great strides in reaching out to referring physicians and patient advocacy groups. A new Patient Advocacy Advisory Board and working groups have been formed, and—under the leadership of SNM members Peter Herscovitch, MD; Patrick Peller, MD; Eric Rohren, MD, PhD; Al Sinusas, MD; and Henry VanBrocklin, PhD—messages have been developed and activities have been outlined and implemented. Referring physician outreach has been broken down into 3 disease-specific areas—cardiology, neurology, and oncology—and working groups have been formed for each to determine the most effective ways to work with related referring physician organizations.

The cardiology working group has been actively developing materials in conjunction with the SNM Cardiovascular Council. The materials will focus on raising awareness of molecular imaging as an alternative to MR/CT angiography, explaining the benefits of myocardial perfusion (versus stress echo), and putting radiation risks in context. The group has chosen SNM ambassadors to specific physician groups (including the American College of Cardiology, the American Heart Association, and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology) to explore joint programs and collaborations.

The neurology working group also is conducting an inventory of materials and working with the SNM Brain Imaging Council to develop additional resources. The group has identified several objectives for its outreach: increasing referring physicians' awareness of effective uses of FDG and the newly available dopamine and amyloid imaging agents for brain imaging and identifying and breaking down barriers to reimbursement for approved procedures. The working group will create continuing education courses and will make them available on a complimentary basis to referring physician groups, such as the Alzheimer's Association, the Lewy Body Dementia Association, the Association for Frontotemporal Dementia, and the American Academy of Neurology.

The oncology working group has been inventorying its materials and will update them with messaging on PET

scans' ability to provide staging information that can result in changes to planned management. The group will also highlight the fact that PET/CT is highly accurate in staging many malignancies. Meetings are scheduled with referring physician organizations—including the American Society of Clinical Oncologists, the American Society for Therapeutic Radiation and Oncology, and the American College of Surgeons' Commission on Cancer—to discuss joint meetings and surveys.

SNM has partnered with several patient advocacy groups to further educate their members about nuclear and molecular imaging. These include the Alzheimer's Association, the American Heart Association, the American Thyroid Association, the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, the Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Arizona, and the Men's Health Network. These groups are part of SNM's Patient Advocacy Advisory Board, which will guide SNM in its activities to reach patients with information about nuclear and molecular imaging. The Patient Advocacy Advisory Board convened at the 2011 SNM Annual Meeting, where a dedicated patient-oriented program featured education sessions on the history of nuclear and molecular imaging, "MI 101" for patients, and more. A board meeting was held to discuss ideas for collaboration with SNM. As a result of the meeting, SNM is creating a series of monthly patient-oriented webinars. SNM will also continue to participate in meetings of various board members.

SNM is developing a new patient-focused Web site based on recommendations from the Patient Advocacy Advisory Board. The Web site, www.DiscoverMI.org, contains information on nuclear and molecular imaging, disease-specific information, videos, news, and more, and is endorsed by each member of the Patient Advocacy Advisory Board. An integrated social media presence will complement the Web site.

SNM has been busy reaching out to those outside of the nuclear and molecular imaging community. The more we educate others on the value of our specialty, the better it is for the overall field.



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