

Moving New Technologies to the Here and Now

As I begin my year as SNMMI-TS president, I am excited to begin working with members, peer associations, health care providers, and others to ensure that the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging continues to advance and to benefit patients. I hope to challenge technologists to expand their horizons and embrace the new opportunities available today.

My top priority as SNMMI-TS president is to facilitate the transition of new drugs and technologies into routine clinical practice, providing education and research opportunities for technologists. Over the past 18 months, we have had several new tracers and therapies approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration—florbetapir for dementia imaging, ^{99m}Tc -tilmanocept injection for lymphatic mapping, and, most recently, ^{223}Ra for treatment of patients with castration-resistant prostate cancer. Many other tracers, such as ^{18}F -flurpiridaz and ^{18}F -fluorothymidine, hold great promise for our field and are being investigated in clinical trials. The role of technologists in the translation of these agents and therapies into clinical practice is an important one.

Education and professional development are critical to bringing technologists up to speed on the latest in our field. Although it is important to train new technologists on these products and technologies, it is also necessary for seasoned veterans to keep up with these advances. SNMMI has always provided high-quality education, and I will focus my efforts in the coming year on ensuring that the society offers continuing education and training opportunities that will fully prepare technologists to utilize new tracers, therapies, and modalities. I hope to create soon a technologist advisory board that will facilitate creation of content, curricula, publications, and symposia covering these emerging technologies.

Regulations, both national and state-specific, also have a large impact on nuclear medicine and molecular imaging technology. The Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging (CARE) bill has once again been introduced at the national level. SNMMI will also take a more targeted approach and work with states

that currently have no licensing regulations for technologists to ensure quality in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. Other topics that will be addressed by the society include reimbursement, international shortages of raw materials and products, and numerous other challenges. The goal of our advocacy efforts is to promote a favorable environment for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in the United States.

Another way to promote a favorable environment for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging is to expand the opportunities available for technologists. Although traditional technologist roles remain a mainstay of the field, new avenues have opened for technologists to explore. With advanced training, imaging professionals' roles are also transitioning from simply providing diagnostic imaging to determine the stage or extent of disease to directing and monitoring treatment of known disease. Research positions also challenge technologists, allowing them to conduct the earliest stages of comparative effectiveness research; submit regulatory filings such as investigational new drug applications, new drug applications, and abbreviated new drug applications; perform market and reimbursement analyses; and manage commercialization and project activities, conduct small animal imaging, and participate in clinical trials.

Our profession is at an important crossroads, and much work remains to be done to ensure that nuclear medicine and molecular imaging technologists thrive. Having worked with many of the SNMMI-TS volunteers over the past year, I know that many dedicated technologists are ready to help lead the society in its efforts to take the field to the next level.



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