

Adapting to the Changing Health Care Landscape

I am honored to have the opportunity to serve the members of the SNMMI as president for the 2014–2015 leadership year. I follow in the footsteps of Gary Dillehay, MD, who successfully led the society as it undertook the first year of its new strategic plan. I look forward to continuing to implement the plan with SNMMI president-elect, Hossein Jadvar, MD, PhD, MPH, MBA, and vice president-elect, Sally W. Schwarz, MS, RPh, BCNP, and with Technologist Section president, April Mann, BA, CNMT, NCT, RT(N), and president-elect, Aaron Scott, MIS, CNMT, NMAA.

Today's health care environment is much different than it was just a few years ago. The landscape is shifting for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, as it is for many other areas of medicine, toward incorporating principles of quality, evidence, and value into everyday clinical decision making and practice while at the same time maintaining focus on ensuring appropriate and adequate reimbursement for procedures. During my term as president, I will concentrate on several key areas that will help nuclear medicine and molecular imaging stay relevant and provide a healthy outlook for the field.

One of SNMMI's primary goals for 2014–2015 will be advancing the quality, value, and safety of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. SNMMI has formed a new Evidence and Quality Department that will focus on and consolidate our efforts in quality and cost effectiveness by developing quality measures, increasing the number of appropriate use criteria and evidence-based guidelines, and supporting comparative effectiveness research. These efforts are necessary to help nuclear medicine professionals, referring physicians, and patients negotiate the health care system and to ensure access to nuclear medicine procedures when these are the most effective and appropriate options available.

Another focus for SNMMI will be facilitating the translation of new radiopharmaceuticals to the clinic, collaborating with academia, industry, other imaging associations, and government agencies. SNMMI will host a stakeholder meeting to clarify the regulatory climate, recommend ways to

improve the existing approval pathway, and discuss ideas for a new approval pathway. In addition, in the coming year we will cosponsor workshops with the World Molecular Imaging Society and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology to identify barriers for translation of new radiopharmaceuticals and work toward solutions to overcome them.

A third area of attention for SNMMI will be to demonstrate to health care providers, patients, and third-party payers the value of nuclear medicine and radionuclide therapy and the impact these procedures have in improving patient health outcomes. In the past few years, the society has built a very successful outreach program to explain nuclear medicine to both patients and health care providers. Nuclear medicine and radionuclide therapy are of great value to patients but are not necessarily well understood. We have collaborated with several physician and patient associations in educational initiatives and are now expanding the program to facilitate dialogue between local nuclear medicine communities and referring physicians. To further strengthen our focus on general nuclear medicine, a General Nuclear Medicine Task Force was recently created to develop a plan for the continued utilization and promotion of general nuclear medicine procedures and to develop educational materials for referring physicians.

Each of these goals, as well as the other SNMMI strategic initiatives, is driven by and will be accomplished through the SNMMI membership. The volunteer leaders of our councils, centers, committees, and other groups are dedicated to advancing the field and play a vital role in the success of the society. I am proud to serve as president of the society and hope to accomplish the goals I have set forth—as well as many other SNMMI objectives—in the coming year.



Peter Herscovitch, MD

*Peter Herscovitch, MD
SNMMI President*