

Working Together to Advance Quality, Innovation, and Understanding

Peter Herscovitch, MD, SNMMI President

It has been a great honor to serve as SNMMI's president during the past year. Because of the efforts of so many dedicated members and our professional staff, we have been very productive on many fronts.

A year ago, SNMMI embraced the national emphasis on evidence-based medicine to ensure quality and safety by establishing the Evidence and Quality Department as well as two new committees. The Quality and Evidence Committee is leading our efforts to measure and improve clinical practice, establish evidence-based benchmarks, and develop education programs and clinical data registries related to quality and safety.

The Guidance Oversight Committee is developing appropriate use criteria (AUC). In 2014, Congress passed the Protecting Access to Medicare Act, which requires professionals to consult AUC via a clinical decision support tool before ordering advanced diagnostic imaging, including nuclear medicine procedures. AUCs will be selected by the Secretary of Health and Human Services by November 15, 2015, and the process must be implemented by 2017. Accordingly, our committee is developing AUC for 4 high-volume nuclear medicine procedures: bone scintigraphy in malignant disease, ventilation/perfusion imaging in pulmonary embolism, hepatobiliary scintigraphy in abdominal pain, and ¹⁸F-FDG PET for restaging malignant disease.

SNMMI has also focused on the translation of new radiopharmaceuticals to the clinic. We hosted a meeting last October on this issue, including stakeholders from the Food and Drug Administration and other government agencies, industry, and specialty societies. These groups worked to clarify the regulatory climate, determine ways to improve the current approval pathway, and develop ideas for a new pathway. A summary of the meeting will be available this summer and will outline desired outcomes and action items.

In 2013, CMS announced its decision to cover one β -amyloid PET scan of the brain to exclude Alzheimer disease, but only for patients participating in specific clinical studies under a "coverage with evidence development" (CED) program. SNMMI worked with the Alzheimer's Association and other societies in the Amyloid Imaging Coverage with Evidence Development Workgroup to develop a CED study for PET amyloid imaging in mild cognitive impairment or dementia of uncertain etiology. This has evolved into the Imaging Dementia—Evidence for Amyloid Scanning (IDEAS) study, which was recently approved by CMS. Participants must be Medicare beneficiaries referred

by dementia specialists and must meet the AUC for amyloid PET. A total of 18,488 Medicare beneficiaries will receive scans over 24 months at sites throughout the United States.

In the past 2 years, SNMMI and the National Cancer Institute held 2 very successful workshops on Targeted Radionuclide Therapy. The workshops supported a recommendation that SNMMI form a center to address therapy issues and promote education and outreach. In April 2015, the SNMMI board formally approved the creation of a Therapy Center of Excellence, and we are now working to establish this new center.

An ongoing program is outreach to health care providers and patients to demonstrate the value of nuclear medicine. We have collaborated with physician associations to offer education through joint sessions and webinars and have created resources to help health care providers with coding and referrals. We also joined forces with several patient advocacy associations to present information to patients in relevant and understandable terms.

In September 2014, SNMMI, the Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance, and the Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals, Inc. sponsored the first meeting of the SNMMI Industry Forum in Washington, DC. The forum brought together professional and industry stakeholders to promote a sustainable field of nuclear medicine. The forum will continue in an ongoing fashion to collaborate in 3 key areas: education and training, reimbursement reform, and evidence development.

SNMMI has also continued its collaboration with peer organizations. Working with the International Atomic Energy Agency, SNMMI has provided educational content to medical professionals throughout the world through a series of webinars; 392 people from 76 countries participated in these seminars this year. We continue to collaborate with the European Association of Nuclear Medicine to develop practice guidelines and offer joint educational sessions. The Nuclear Medicine Global Initiative completed its first project on harmonization of pediatric administered activity guidelines and will move on to a new project on access and availability of radiopharmaceuticals. The society continued to work with the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and



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