

Challenges, Opportunities, and Accomplishments

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My year as president of SNMMI has flown by. It has been a year of challenges, opportunities, and, I'm pleased to say, accomplishments.

The Therapy Center of Excellence (CoE) is up and running! Dedicated to all aspects of the development and utilization of targeted radionuclide therapy (TRT) as an alternative or addition to other treatments, the center provides a forum for members with similar interests, serves as a repository of TRT expertise and data, fosters research and education, and provides opportunities for collaboration with other professionals and organizations.

As the center's work moves forward, it will focus on addressing the lack of availability of targeted radioisotopes for research and clinical use, helping to develop guidelines for integrating TRT into existing standards of care, and providing a better understanding of TRT side effects/toxicity compared with conventional therapies (taking into consideration patient-reported outcomes). As with all new therapies, reimbursement by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is a concern. The Therapy CoE will collect data to support the efficacy of specific TRTs, making the case for funding.

Nuclear medicine remains at a critical crossroads, with challenges that must be addressed. The SNMMI's Pathways to the Future of Nuclear Medicine Task Force is leading the effort to identify training pathways that optimize the delivery of high-quality, value-driven clinical nuclear medicine practice.

The task force is now in Phase 1 of a 2-phase process. In this first phase, it is engaging the nuclear medicine community in discussion about optimal training pathways that could address and alleviate the challenges we face. The task force is considering a nuclear residency (before or after certification in diagnostic radiology or for those certified in nonimaging fields), nuclear medicine embedded in diagnostic radiology (16 months during 4 years), a 1-year nuclear medicine fellowship for radiologists, and a combined nuclear medicine/diagnostic radiology residency program (after 1 year of clinical internship).

In Phase 2, the task force will reach out to the radiology community, bringing radiology leaders into the discussion of the issues and final recommendations. The focus must be on quality and value, but how these are best achieved remains an open question for discussion.

In response to the Protecting Access to Medicare Act of 2014, SNMMI is moving forward with the development of evidence-based appropriate use criteria (AUC). By January of 2017, the new law will require the use of AUC prior to ordering advanced diagnostic imaging services. I have taken an active role in this effort by chairing the committee that is developing the AUC for PET/CT in restaging cancer. In an effort to create multidisciplinary, evidence-based guidelines, we are collaborating with a number of medical societies. For example, I serve as cochair

of the joint American College of Radiology–SNMMI PET/MR credentialing task force.

SNMMI leadership is committed to developing a comprehensive library of multidisciplinary, evidence-based AUC for high-value nuclear medicine procedures. This long-term endeavor will require sustained effort and significant resources. The first 4 AUC are well underway, and the SNMMI Evidence and Quality Department is developing multidisciplinary workgroups for the 6 new topics: imaging of prostate cancer, imaging of somatostatin receptors, imaging of infection, imaging of gastrointestinal transit, nuclear medicine procedures for thyroid cancer (including ^{131}I and ^{123}I), and ^{223}Ra . Work on these AUC should begin shortly after the SNMMI Annual Meeting in June in San Diego, CA.

Although challenges remain, the nuclear medicine and molecular imaging fields are growing. Exciting diagnostic and therapeutic advances are happening around the globe, and they are improving people's lives. Over the past year, I have traveled to Australia, Austria, Brazil, China, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Korea, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Spain, and Uruguay, attending international meetings and forging stronger ties with international societies. We must work together to ensure that our field remains innovative and a key component of quality care globally.

I am so honored to have served as president of SNMMI, and I intend to stay actively involved in the society. In fact, I am currently serving as guest editor of a fall *JNM* supplement issue on prostate cancer. I extend a heart-felt thank you to all who have volunteered and helped advance the many initiatives of the society! In particular, I would like to thank Peter Herscovitch, MD, Sally Schwarz, MS, Bennett Greenspan, MD, and Virginia Pappas, CAE, in the SNMMI leadership team for providing invaluable advice and insight during my term. It has also been a great pleasure to work with Michael Middleton, MD, Aaron Scott, CNMT, and Sara Johnson, MBA, CNMT, in the executive team. Many thanks to the Board of Directors and the staff, as well, for their assistance.

In addition, I am grateful to my home Department of Radiology at the University of Southern California for its support. And last, but certainly not least, my sincere thanks to my wife, Mojgan, and my daughters, Donya and Delara, for their love, inspiration, understanding, and support. As I now turn the leadership over to Sally Schwarz, I remain excited about the future of nuclear medicine and confident that the year ahead will bring clarity to our path forward.



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