

## Preparing the Next Generation of Nuclear Medicine Professionals

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**A**s SNMMI moves into the spring, the society will focus on the value of nuclear medicine. We need to increase the growth and strength of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging through defined physician training pathways and a concentrated focus on value. During the spring Board of Directors meeting, we will review SNMMI's mission and objectives and make plans for future initiatives.

SNMMI's Pathways to the Future of Nuclear Medicine Task Force was charged with leading the effort to identify physician training pathways that optimize the delivery of high-quality, value-driven clinical nuclear medicine practice. Those pathways have now been identified and discussed with the radiology community (see the Pathways to the Future of Nuclear Medicine Task Force: Phase 1 Report, at [http://snmmi.files.cms-plus.com/News/PTFNM\\_Report\\_for\\_Web.pdf](http://snmmi.files.cms-plus.com/News/PTFNM_Report_for_Web.pdf)), and we are seeing some strong collaborative spirit. For example, the American Board of Radiology (ABR) is in the process of increasing their nuclear medicine training from 4 to 16 months for its nuclear radiology certification. The radiology community is seeing the importance of nuclear medicine, and our dialogue is ongoing.

Now our attention at SNMMI is on a new Value Initiative that will focus on:

- Quality of practice (including development of appropriate use criteria and minimizing radiation exposure);
- Research and development, including new technology and drug discovery;
- Advocacy;
- The workforce pipeline; and
- Outreach to the imaging community.

As we develop the workforce pipeline, we are emphasizing that nuclear medicine is a specialty, not a subspecialty. We are in conversation with academic radiology program directors about the value of nuclear medicine to the field

of radiology to encourage an increase in the number of nuclear medicine programs. We are promoting dual training for nuclear medicine and radiology, with dual certification by the American Board of Nuclear Medicine and ABR. Future nuclear medicine physicians will need to be dual-trained practitioners.

SNMMI will be reaching out to medical students and residents, introducing them to nuclear medicine and demonstrating the value and exciting career opportunities it offers. We will also be working with the American Medical Association on this outreach through its medical student and residency sections. In addition, we are going to set up a website with information and resources for medical students and residents, including new summer internship opportunities and grant programs that would help make a career in nuclear medicine more attractive.

Nuclear medicine has an increasing role in therapy—the development and utilization of targeted radioisotope therapy, which includes increased development of dosimetry assessments. This is a multidisciplinary field, involving industry, big pharma, physicians, scientists, government, and regulatory agencies. It represents a huge refocus, with exciting opportunities to advance patient care.

As we look to the next generation of nuclear medicine professionals, our goal is to increase enthusiasm for the field and ensure the highest level of education and training for nuclear medicine physicians, technologists, researchers, and chemists/pharmacists. To that end, we are emphasizing the myriad ways that nuclear medicine adds value to medical imaging, quality health care, and, ultimately, ensures that patients have the best health care possible.



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