

SNMMI 2020: Global Virtual Annual Meeting Announced

On April 30, Vasken Dilsizian, MD, president of SNMMI, released a statement on the launch of an extraordinary collaborative project to take the society's Annual Meeting online for 2020. The meeting, originally scheduled for June 13 to 16 in New Orleans, LA, will be held July 11–14 entirely online and available as both live events and recorded presentations. “We wanted to do the planning and lay the groundwork to ensure that we could offer online the same vibrant, diverse, and scientifically cutting-edge content to which we have become accustomed at SNMMI Annual Meetings,” Dilsizian said at the time of the release. “Through the efforts of the entire SNMMI community—leadership, members, industry, presenters, and staff—we are confident that this will be both a success and a forward-looking bright spot as we emerge from challenging times.”

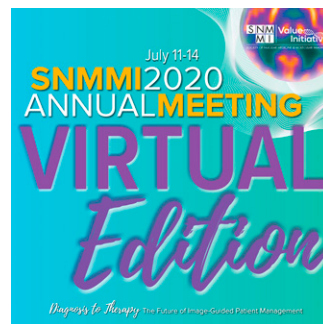
The decision to create a global virtual meeting was made when it became apparent that New Orleans would not be ready in June to host a large meeting like SNMMI's. The New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, where many of the meeting's exhibits and presentations were scheduled, is slated to remain as a temporary COVID-19 health care facility through the fall. Travel, both domestic and international, is likely to remain problematic in the near future.

The interactive platform for the virtual meeting will allow members of the nuclear medicine community to attend live continuing education sessions, review and listen

to hundreds of scientific abstracts on demand, tour a technically dazzling virtual exhibit hall, and attend networking events—all in a flexible format designed to meet individual schedule needs. Meeting content will be free to all SNMMI members, with discounted registration available to nonmembers.

The SNMMI Annual Meeting is usually attended by more than 5,000 physicians, technologists, scientists, and exhibitors. “I am truly excited about this exceptional and innovative program, which will include nuclear medicine and molecular imaging experts from around the world,” said Dilsizian. “We have the opportunity this year to reach out and connect with even more members of our community, wherever they are, to share perspectives, advance techniques, learn about new technologies, and explore scientific discoveries that will continue to sustain our growth as an essential specialty in modern medicine.”

SNMMI has posted and will continuously update additional information about the 2020 Virtual Meeting at www.snmmi.org/am2020, including a section on frequently asked questions.



Early Guidelines in the COVID-19 Pandemic

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced on April 21 the development of guidelines to help nuclear medicine departments adapt operating procedures to minimize the risk of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infections among patients, staff, and the public. The guidelines also addressed possible shortages of essential imaging radiopharmaceuticals resulting from global air traffic restrictions. These recommendations were first published on April 15 ahead of print in the *European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging* by Diana Paez, head of the IAEA Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Imaging Section, and a panel of experts representing nuclear medicine practitioners from 10 countries.

“Noncommunicable diseases continue to kill millions of people each year, and patients must have access to PET/CT scans and radiotherapy to battle cancer,” said May Abdel-Wahab, director of the IAEA Human Health Division. “Nuclear medicine physicians and staff need guidance to carry out imaging studies while preventing the further spread of COVID-19 during procedures. They also need to be prepared for potential disruptions in the supply chain of essential radioactive tracers.”

These early guidelines were produced in response to requests from nuclear medicine departments in several IAEA Member States and were based on a review of available literature as well as contributions from a panel of international experts and results from an April 16 IAEA-organized webinar on COVID-19 challenges for nuclear medicine departments. The IAEA is also organizing a broad range of other global webinars during the pandemic, with more than 4,000 attendees in the first weeks of April alone.

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, special emphasis must be placed on implementing all infection prevention and control measures so that the essential nuclear medicine services can be provided,” said Paez. “The document is a targeted effort to support departments in achieving this objective during this most challenging time.”

The IAEA guidelines are based in part on World Health Organization guidance for essential health services during an outbreak. Detailed in the document are recommendations on establishing simplified purpose-designed governance and coordinating mechanisms, identifying context-relevant essential services, optimizing service delivery settings and platforms,