

SNMMI Receives Department of Energy Grant to Assist in Sub-Saharan Africa

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced in July the award of a 3-year, \$750,000 grant to SNMMI to support capacity building for nuclear medicine professionals and initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. The grant will help address a growing need in the region for nuclear medicine training and program development. “We thank the NNSA for providing this unique opportunity,” said SNMMI President Alan Packard, PhD. “We are very excited to be able to work with countries in this region to expand patient access to nuclear medicine procedures that will improve the health and well-being of their citizens.” The Radiological Society of North America received a similar award, with a goal of establishing a global learning center.

The grants serve as part of the overall U.S. contribution stemming from Article IV of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in which the United States and other nations are committed to facilitating access to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including for medical purposes. “These new partnerships will help expand access to this vital knowledge to a part of the world

that needs these services,” said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Brent Park, PhD.

An SNMMI DOE Grant Task Force, chaired by Suzanne Lapi, PhD, will manage activities related to the grant. Task force member Giuseppe Esposito, MD, attended a workshop hosted by Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs in December 2019 to establish contacts with medical professionals and officials from sub-Saharan African countries and learn about their capabilities and needs. The workshop provided a venue for attendees to discuss methods for reliable and sustainable expansion of access to the benefits of peaceful uses assistance and cooperation under the NPT. More than 50 representatives from 25 African countries, including diplomats and nontraditional stakeholders from industry, academia, and technical fields, attended the workshop.

The SNMMI DOE Grant Task Force is now further researching the needs of potential target nations, with a goal of narrowing the focus to 2 or 3 countries in varying stages of nuclear medicine program development.

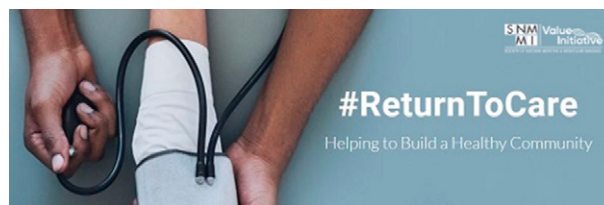
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SNMMI Promotes a #ReturnToCare

On July 29, SNMMI’s Outreach Domain, in concert with the society’s COVID-19 Task Force, announced the launch of a campaign to promote public health by encouraging patients to seek necessary screenings, vaccinations, scans, and treatments that have been put off as a result of concerns about COVID-19. Because these procedures help control and prevent disease, postponement may lead to long-term consequences.

Progression of cancer could be one of those consequences. In a June 19 editorial in *Science*, National Cancer Institute Director Norman E. “Ned” Sharpless, MD, wrote that delays in screenings, diagnoses, and treatment because of the pandemic could have a significant and lasting impact: “Cancers being missed now will still come to light eventually, but at a later stage (‘upstaging’) and with worse prognoses,” he said, noting that a conservative model of the effect of such delays for breast and colorectal cancers alone “suggests almost 10,000 excess deaths” over the next decade.

To address this issue, SNMMI has reached out to multiple organizations to propose a unified communications campaign.



At the date of the launch, the coalition included 6 patient advocacy groups, 7 medical and imaging societies, and an industry trade group. The #ReturnToCare campaign will spread the message that patients should work with their health care providers to seek the care they need in a safe and timely fashion. SNMMI encouraged its members to share this message within their communities and on social media platforms using the #ReturnToCare hashtag. For more information and updates, see www.returntocare-campaign.org.

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