

State of the Society: SNMMI Thrives Despite COVID-19 Challenges

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Over the past year, SNMMI has navigated the most difficult operating environment we have experienced in our history. Throughout the year, SNMMI's board of directors and management team collaborated closely to enable the organization to deliver services to our members and meet the health and safety needs of our employees, then move above and beyond to conceive and implement new, exciting programs and ideas.

From the start of the pandemic, SNMMI took precautions to ensure the safety of members and staff, changing meetings to virtual formats and creating a new, effective work environment for staff and society operations. With SNMMI's already extensive experience in the virtual environment, these functions not only proved engaging and effective but also expanded our presence in the nuclear medicine space worldwide.

At the same time, the society worked closely with federal organizations and other groups on COVID-related issues, including vaccination priority for members and the availability of essential isotopes and amino acid solution. SNMMI also created an online COVID-19 Resource Center to ensure that members had the news, information, and advice they needed to support them in their practice.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, SNMMI has advanced not only our existing projects but also a wide range of new initiatives. To promote advances in radiopharmaceutical therapy, a Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Centers of Excellence program and a Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Registry have been created. A therapy toolkit for sites beginning implementation has been developed, as well as practice resources, education, and information regarding dosimetry. New research fellowships, awards, and a technologist therapy badging program are now available or in progress. Much of this information can be found on the new RPT website portal at www.snmmi.org/therapy.

SNMMI has launched a new initiative to increase awareness of nuclear medicine among referring physicians and the general public, utilizing broad-based consumer media outreach. The society has also promoted cutting-edge research via *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, which dramatically increased its impact and influence among 133 medical journals in the medical imaging category.

In the health policy and regulatory affairs area, the FIND Act of 2021 was introduced in both the House of

Representatives and the Senate. If passed, this legislation would significantly expand patient access to a wide range of diagnostic radiopharmaceuticals that can better detect conditions such as heart disease, Alzheimer and Parkinson disease, breast and prostate cancer, and neuroendocrine tumors. This legislation would also help providers better manage costs while delivering more targeted and cost-efficient care.

Years of work from SNMMI and its partners also paid off this summer as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and Humana allowed coverage for non-oncologic PET imaging. In addition, with the retirement of the National Coverage Determination for ¹⁸F-FDG PET infection and inflammation, coding barriers have been removed and coverage determinations are now made by local Medicare Administrative Contractors. CMS is also considering new coverage for beta-amyloid imaging, which is supported by SNMMI.

Understanding that artificial intelligence will greatly impact the future of medicine, SNMMI has created several related initiatives. An Artificial Intelligence Taskforce, formed earlier this year, launched a challenge in conjunction with the Michael J. Fox Foundation to collect clinical data from DaTScan images. The task force has also been drafting manuscripts for submission to *JNM* and planning for an Artificial Intelligence Summit to be held in early 2022.

During the pandemic, fantastic progress has been made in the development of new agents and therapies, setting up the profession for increasing growth. Looking forward, we hope to hold events in-person to support this growth, including the Therapeutics Conference, November 11–14, 2021, in New Orleans, LA, and the Mid-Winter Meeting, January 28–31, 2022, in Orlando, FL.

I am proud to share with you that the decisions we made have put SNMMI on track to end fiscal year 2021 with very healthy positions of operating cash and investments. We are extremely grateful for our leadership, members, volunteers, corporate partners, and employees who have come together during this challenging time to enable SNMMI to continue to promote the value of nuclear medicine, molecular imaging, and radionuclide therapy. The innovative programs and services developed were extraordinarily successful and have allowed the society to remain healthy and strong.