

Making Nuclear Medicine a Household Phrase

Munir Ghesani, MD, SNMMI President

Although certain medical terms are known to the general public—dialysis, biopsy, and chemotherapy, for example—nuclear medicine does not usually fall into that category. Nuclear medicine remains relatively unknown, misunderstood, and underutilized, to the detriment of patients. As nuclear medicine and molecular imaging professionals, we know the vital role that it plays in patient care. On behalf of the entire field, SNMMI is working to make sure that others outside of our community know it as well.

As part of SNMMI's Value Initiative, the society launched a robust consumer awareness campaign to educate the public about what nuclear medicine is and what it can accomplish. By translating the latest research and telling compelling stories, the society has successfully reached patients, caregivers, referring physicians, legislators, regulators, and payers about the benefits of nuclear medicine. In fact, in the campaign's first 6 months, stories about nuclear medicine and molecular imaging were featured in media reaching more than 1 billion consumers.

The consumer awareness campaign began with the creation of core messages focused on the fact that nuclear medicine can diagnose and treat disease effectively and safely, with minimal side effects and exceptional results for patients. With the latest advances in nuclear medicine therapies, messages were also developed about radiopharmaceutical treatments.

Once the key messages were drafted, a plan was made to garner media attention throughout the country and specifically in the Washington, DC, market, where a heavy concentration of regulators and legislators reside. The society developed relationships with reporters who cover science and health for major newspapers and magazines, radio, television, and online news publications. SNMMI promoted stories about recently published research in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, connecting these stories to current events or occasions to provide relevance. Stories highlighting patients who have benefited from nuclear medicine imaging and therapy were also made available to the media.

Since the campaign's inception, the society has garnered many high-profile media placements. Nuclear medicine was spotlighted on the popular New York radio channel Q104.3 in a 3-part series with award-winning radio host Shelli Sonstein. The first interview in September 2021 focused on nuclear medicine as an innovative cancer treatment, and the second in February 2022 covered nuclear medicine in nononcologic disease. Sonstein saw so much value in these interviews that she had SNMMI back a third time this past July to discuss nuclear medicine as a tool to both diagnose and treat prostate cancer, as well as research from the Annual Meeting.

On the television front, SNMMI has secured interviews on many news shows. Placements include the Fox 5 DC Morning Show (unusual imaging patterns on ^{18}F -FDG PET/CT scans possibly due to COVID Omicron variant infections), Fox Good Day LA (PET/CT artificial intelligence model for predicting risk of future heart attack), ABC 7 DC News (cardiac nuclear medicine), NBC 4 DC News (nuclear medicine to diagnose and treat cancer), Fox 5 DC Good Day DC (nuclear medicine as a game-changer), Fox DC Weekend Show (nuclear medicine to diagnose colon cancer), Fox Good Day LA (nuclear medicine to treat Parkinson's disease), and DCTV District Life Show (nuclear medicine to diagnose and treat prostate cancer).

Nuclear medicine was also covered in several print and online publications. *CURE Magazine* published an article about the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval of Pluvicto, interviewing Richard Wahl, MD, about the treatment. SNMMI patient advocates also represented the society in interviews with *Health Central Online*, *Authority Magazine*, and *Thrive Global*. *Authority Magazine* also interviewed Helen Nadel, MD, SNMMI vice president, about inspiring women in STEM fields.

Complementing our consumer awareness campaign, the society has also continued its outreach to patient and referring physician associations with the goal of educating patients and the medical community about the value of nuclear medicine, molecular imaging, and radionuclide therapy. SNMMI's Patient Advocacy Advisory Board (PAAB) advises the society on development of patient education materials and public policy. This year, the PAAB welcomed 2 new members: Cancer ABCs and the Pheo-Para Alliance. The society also educates referring physicians by presenting at events hosted by organizations such as the Pediatric Endocrine Society, Large Urology Group Practice Association, American Urological Association, and San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

The consumer awareness campaign has seen much success, and this is only the beginning. As advances in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging continue—especially with the effectiveness and increased availability of radiopharmaceutical therapies—we expect that media interest in our field will continue to grow. And with more awareness from consumers, referring physicians, legislators, and other key audiences, nuclear medicine will be well on its way to becoming a common household phrase.



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