

Transforming the Science and Practice of Nuclear Medicine

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The nuclear medicine and molecular imaging field has made significant progress in the past year, and the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI) is making every effort to support that growth. In October 2022, the society established a new strategic plan focusing on 8 key areas: research and discovery, advocacy, outreach, education, quality of practice, workforce pipeline, membership, and organizational strength and sustainability. Work in all of these areas is currently in progress, and I am pleased to share what has been achieved so far.

Encouraging research and innovation has led to scientific advances that will continue to push our field forward. At last year's annual meeting, the SNMMI launched the Mars Shot Research Fund, an ambitious initiative aimed at raising \$100 million to support research in nuclear medicine, molecular imaging, and therapy. Within the first year, over \$3 million has been raised to fund innovative research in prostate, breast, and neuroendocrine cancers as well as other best-in-class ideas. Recently, the SNMMI collaborated with the Lobular Breast Cancer Alliance to establish a \$100,000 joint fellowship for invasive lobular carcinoma imaging research—the first award from the new fund. With continued support from donors, the SNMMI aims to accelerate the development of new and effective treatments, ultimately improving patient outcomes.

The Journal of Nuclear Medicine is the SNMMI's flagship publication, and it continues to publish groundbreaking research, from concept through clinical trials. Perspectives on current issues promote discussion in the field and foster collaboration and innovation, advancing research and improving patient outcomes. *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine* remains the top journal in the nuclear medicine field and ranks fourth in terms of impact factor among all medical imaging journals.

To support the growth of radiopharmaceutical therapy, the society developed a Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Central website (<https://therapy.snmmi.org/>) that houses tools, resources, education, and additional information, including a list of Radiopharmaceutical Therapy Centers of Excellence. Since its creation in 2022, this program has designated 32 comprehensive sites, 16 clinical centers, and 3 basic centers. With more than 60 companies currently developing radiopharmaceutical therapies and many clinical trials under way, it is exceptionally important to ensure that nuclear medicine facilities have comprehensive quality control measures in place, that physicians practicing nuclear medicine have up-to-date training, and that technologists practicing nuclear medicine are appropriately trained and certified.

The SNMMI is also partnering with the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission to establish a new accreditation program for

facilities that offer radiopharmaceutical therapy procedures. This accreditation will demonstrate that a facility adheres to specific standards for training and education, performance, and documentation, confirming its dedication to maintaining high levels of quality and patient safety. The program is expected to launch later this year.

To increase patient access to nuclear medicine, the SNMMI is leading the charge on the Facilitating Innovative Nuclear Diagnostics Act of 2023 (House of Representatives bill 1199), working in partnership with more than 80 stakeholder organizations, including the Medical Imaging and Technology Alliance and the Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals. By modifying the reimbursement process for diagnostic nuclear medicine radiopharmaceuticals—appropriately recognizing them as radiopharmaceutical drugs rather than supplies—the act will improve the availability of nuclear medicine procedures, ultimately improving patient outcomes. The bill was introduced to the House of Representatives in February and has already garnered more than 25 cosponsors; it was introduced in the Senate in May. For more information or to support, visit www.snmmi.org/FINDAct.

The SNMMI played a key role in removing the national coverage determination for infection and inflammation, working closely with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This has allowed local Medicare administrative contractors to make determinations without coding restrictions, improving patient access to nuclear medicine procedures.

Elevating the visibility of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging has been a significant priority for the SNMMI. In the fall of 2021, the society launched a new consumer media program designed to enhance public awareness of nuclear medicine, emphasizing its precision and effectiveness, safety, and ability to deliver exceptional outcomes. Stories have been carried by major consumer media in markets across the nation. The program has yielded remarkable results, having already reached well over 1 billion consumers.

The SNMMI has also conducted targeted outreach to engage specific groups. One initiative is a new theranostics leadership and operational group that brings together nuclear medicine section chiefs and targeted radiopharmaceutical therapy leaders of academic institutions as well as community and private practices. This initiative creates networking opportunities for sharing best practices and for providing solutions to any individual institution's specific needs, as well as reiterating and reinforcing the importance of nuclear medicine as an integral part of the health-care team.



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In another initiative, the SNMMI is working with a growing number of patient and physician groups to provide key information, educate and support patients, and advocate on shared concerns. International outreach also remains a priority for the SNMMI, as the society partners with the U.S. Department of Energy to expand access to nuclear medicine in sub-Saharan Africa and undertakes global initiatives to standardize terminology for radiopharmaceutical therapy and establish a neuroblastoma registry.

The SNMMI has consistently offered top-notch educational opportunities that are a cornerstone of society activities. In 2022, as the pandemic surge receded, the society hosted 2 successful therapeutics conferences educating attendees on the latest innovations and clinical applications in radiopharmaceutical therapy; another conference is scheduled in the fall of 2023. The mid-winter meeting in San Francisco, with a special focus on brain imaging, was also highly successful.

This year's annual meeting in Chicago, with the theme of "eye on the patient," will feature some significant updates: a revamped science pavilion will replace the poster hall, and new "Best of" scientific sessions will showcase important science presented at other significant meetings that intersect with nuclear medicine. The Knowledge Bowl will be expanded and enhanced, arena sessions will encourage engagement, and "Eye on U" stage talks will focus on personal growth. Following this year's meeting theme, Patient Education Day will provide a unique opportunity for patients and caregivers to learn about nuclear medicine, radiation safety, and clinical trials, with in-depth sessions on specific types of cancer as well as a tour of the exhibit hall. All these changes promise to offer a unique and enriching experience for attendees looking to stay current with the latest advances in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

Dosimetry is an integral part of precision nuclear medicine. The SNMMI recently released the *MIRD Primer 2022*—a comprehensive, state-of-the-art guide to radiopharmaceutical dosimetry that reflects the dramatic evolution of the field of nuclear medicine, including molecular imaging and radiopharmaceutical therapy. The popular hands-on dosimetry open-house sessions will

continue at this year's annual meeting. In addition, the SNMMI is developing a new dosimetry certificate program in response to the growing demand for qualified personnel to perform personalized dosimetry calculations for radiopharmaceutical therapy.

The SNMMI is committed to standardizing and optimizing nuclear medicine through quality initiatives. Since the beginning of 2022, the society has developed 12 guidelines and appropriate-use criteria, many of them in collaboration with other nuclear medicine organizations. The society is working to develop its radiopharmaceutical registry (RaPTR) and RaPTR+PLUS databases, which focus on prostate cancer therapy clinical data; the first 2 pilot sites have received institutional review board approval for data entry into RaPTR+PLUS, which will begin shortly. Additionally, the SNMMI has launched a new therapy clinical trials network to support and facilitate research trials for radiopharmaceutical therapy.

SNMMI recognizes the critical importance of building a strong workforce pipeline for the field of nuclear medicine. To this end, the society has collaborated with IMV Inc., a recognized leader in medical market research, on a comprehensive study to assess current and future trends in the nuclear medicine workforce. A new docuseries titled "Jobs of Tomorrow" will be released to showcase the exciting opportunities that lie ahead for up-and-coming professionals in the field. The annual meeting will feature a nuclear medicine career fair and a student leadership academy, providing valuable opportunities for career growth and networking. Keep an eye out for more exciting developments in this area.

The SNMMI is working hard to advance the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. As my term as president comes to a close, I will be passing the torch to the capable hands of Helen Nadel, and I look forward to an even stronger year ahead under her helm. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the SNMMI leadership, Value Initiative members, volunteers, and staff who have all contributed to the progress of our field. The future of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging looks promising, and it is a more exciting time than ever to be a part of this profession.