

MESSAGE FROM THE P R E S I D E N T

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We often stop to think about the value of our membership in a professional organization when we sign the check to pay our annual dues. When you renewed your membership recently, you were given the opportunity to comment on our services and recommend ways in which we might serve you better. We are serious about trying to improve our services and our value to you and always encourage your comments and suggestions.

One question that members often have, when considering membership in a national organization, is "Why should I belong to a national organization when I can join the state or local group for a lower fee? All I want to do is get my continuing education hours and I can do that just by going to local meetings."

Your local meetings were evaluated and awarded credit by a national organization, an organization that has the skills and reputation for scrutinizing and awarding educational credit. If the national organization did not exist, you would not have received your credit.

How did you receive your education as a nuclear medicine technologist? Most of you attended an educational program in nuclear medicine technology that was accredited by a national organization. The value of national, as opposed to state or local, accreditation is that it permits you to move easily around the country. National accreditation also is recognized by a national certification board that allows you to take the nationally-recognized certifying examination. If a national organization did not exist, we would not have the accrediting organization or certifying body that we now sponsor. Even if states were willing to put the time and money into developing exams and evaluating educational programs, a national standing would always carry more prestige.

How would you exchange technical and professional education efficiently if there were no annual, national meetings? The value of important ideas that are published in local newsletters is enhanced when they become distributed widely to the largest number of tech-

nologists possible. We can do some things fairly well at the grassroots level, but the true value of new findings, new procedures, new protocols, new techniques is that they are presented, challenged and accepted on a wider, national level. It is important that other specialties, which are national in scope, recognize these contributions to the practice of medicine. As is often the case in nuclear medicine technology, the value of having a national organization is that it allows technologists from smaller communities to present their findings nationally and receive national recognition in the health care arena.

Meeting with our colleagues in the various political arenas makes a national organization a must. When we lobby in Congress for a particular piece of legislation, the impact is more powerful coming from the combined efforts of a number of grassroots organizations under the auspices of a national group, representing people from all over the country. This is the kind of effect we want to have, not only with Congress but with regulatory agencies, third party payers and privately funded organizations, such as the Pew Commission. The statements must represent a large, well-organized, well-distributed group of individuals in order to carry weight.

A national organization is an excellent link for regional or local groups, such as chapter or state societies. In many ways, those groups can better carry out some of the responsibilities locally rather than nationally. But they work much more effectively if they are officially linked by a national society than if they were loosely organized.

The commitment to service, to putting in the volunteer hours and, most importantly, to continuity over the years is the value you receive when you belong to the national society. The national society doesn't depend on whether the local group can find a president this year, or whether someone will volunteer to put on a program. You support the reputation of your profession when you send in your Technologist Section membership dollars every year.