

Change Is A-Happening...and It's a Good Thing

In order to evolve, change is necessary, and I think it is a good thing. SNM and SNMTS have embraced multiple changes this year in an effort to better our organization and better the field of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging.

At the SNM mid-winter meeting in January, the SNM house of delegates considered and passed (with a two-thirds vote) a proposed amendment to the SNM bylaws that would change the name of the association to the "Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging." Molecular imaging has its roots in nuclear medicine, and they share many of the same fundamental principles. SNM has embraced emerging functional imaging technologies beyond those that utilize radioactivity. Therefore, the name change was proposed to reflect the natural evolution of our identity and to correspond with the advancement of our profession.

During the discussion in the meeting of the house of delegates, many members stepped up to speak in favor of the name change. Some spoke of how their schools and departments had changed their names to include molecular imaging. Some spoke of the expansion of their responsibilities to include new modalities. Many spoke of the strength of nuclear medicine and the necessity of keeping it in the society's name.

The name "Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging" retains SNM's identity while opening up to new possibilities and members, such as scientists, technologists, clinicians, and laboratory professionals whose primary focus is nonnuclear molecular imaging. It recognizes the growing diversity in imaging, nuclear and nonnuclear, molecular and nonmolecular. It also recognizes the therapeutic, medicinal aspects of the specialty by retaining the words *nuclear medicine*.



The next step in the name change process will occur at the SNM annual meeting in June, where SNM voting members must approve changing the articles of incorporation. Voting members include individuals who are in the full or associate categories. If you are a technologist and would like to vote in this process, you may contact the SNM Membership Department (memberinfo@snm.org) to inquire about your membership category. Should the change to the articles of incorporation be passed by the membership, the SNMTS will follow suit and will adopt the name change into its bylaws, becoming the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging Technologist Section.

At the mid-winter meeting, the SNM board of directors also approved updating the definition of nuclear medicine technologist. Now, in sync with the SNMTS scope of practice, the description of a nuclear medicine technologist will read as follows: "Nuclear medicine technologists are allied health professionals who, under the direction of an authorized user, are committed to applying the art and skill of their profession to

optimize diagnostic evaluation and therapy through the safe and effective use of radiopharmaceuticals and adjunctive medications. Nuclear medicine, which includes many aspects of molecular imaging, is the medical specialty that utilizes sealed and unsealed radioactive materials in the diagnosis and therapy of various diseases. This practice also includes the utilization of pharmaceuticals (used as adjunctive medications) and other imaging modalities with or without contrast to enhance the evaluation of physiologic processes at a molecular level." This description accurately summarizes what nuclear medicine technologists are taught (essentials of the accredited educational program), what they are tested on (content outline of credentialing boards), and what they practice (task analysis). Going forward, we will incorporate this definition into our documents and approach other organizations to adopt this definition as well.

No one better embodies this new description than recent graduates of nuclear medicine technology programs. The SNMTS values our young professionals and, that being so, has created a new membership rate for students during their first year after graduation (only students participating in the free-trial program are eligible for consideration). The SNMTS student membership task force believes that by reducing the membership fee by half for the first year after graduation (a rate of \$52), more students will continue their membership within the SNMTS. With the current economic pressures, it is harder for students to find work immediately upon graduation. The reduced fee will allow them to keep the benefits they need and will show that the SNMTS is still supportive of them during their transition period.

To keep up with the ever-changing technology and techniques in nuclear

medicine and molecular imaging, the SNM 2012 annual meeting will offer updated courses on need-to-know information for technologists. The meeting—to be held June 9–13 in Miami Beach, Florida—will feature courses on PET/MRI, technical advances in myocardial perfusion imaging, imaging of heart failure, peptide receptor radionuclide therapy, and more. Our plenary session will be keynoted by author and

cancer survivor Betsy de Parry, who will share her insight into the experience of illness and teach us specific steps to improve the lives of patients. We also will offer several networking opportunities—the Technologist First Timer’s Breakfast, the SNMTS New Professionals Reception, and, of course, the annual SNMTS party, this year themed “Tanks, Tees, and TECHS!” Don’t forget to bring your flip-flops too!

The changes we make within our field and our society are not just the work of a select few. There are countless individuals who are committed to nuclear medicine and molecular imaging, and I thank each and every one of you for your dedication and hard work.

**Ann Marie Alessi, BS, CNMT,
NCT, RT(N)**
SNMTS President