

Advancing Technologist Education

Last summer, the SNMMI-TS took part in a strategic planning process that identified a new plan and a new vivid description for the Section's future: "The Technologist Section of the SNMMI has elevated the importance and value of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging in contributing to successful patient outcomes. Technologists as related professionals are recognized as integral partners within the medical health care team. The Section provides multidisciplinary educational content offered in a variety of formats and develops educational models to include the expanding—and increasingly complex—educational content that is necessary for preparing knowledgeable, competent, and qualified professionals."

Over the past 6 months, we have made great strides to begin working toward an expanded educational future. A graduate-level curriculum subcommittee was created, chaired by David Gilmore, MS, CNMT, RT(N), FSNMMI-TS, and was charged with exploring options for advanced-level education and programs for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging technologists. The subcommittee held a stakeholders' meeting on December 15, 2013, to get input and feedback from experts in the field. In addition, a technologist advisory board (TAB) was created, chaired by Elizabeth Hackett, RT(N) (CT), PET, FSNMMI-TS, and charged with identifying core areas within the field that are in need of additional resources for technologists. The TAB held its first meeting January 11, 2014.

As the representative body for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging technologists, we have the duty of assisting in developing advanced career opportunities for the community to ensure the overall success of the field and its professionals. The Technologist Section takes great pride in providing its members with information on opportunities that exist within the field, including, but not limited to, certification boards, educational offerings, advanced-degree programs, and career pathways.

As you know, the SNMMI-TS spent many years researching and creating a middle-level position for providers of nuclear medicine services and developing a curriculum that would coincide with this new advanced-level position. Now, several years later, the SNMMI-TS understands the importance of creating additional masters-level programs that will provide advanced-level educational opportunities to members. During the graduate-level curriculum subcommittee meeting this past December, the subcommittee members created a statement that was presented during the SNMMI mid-winter meeting for approval. The statement outlines the Section's position on graduate-level education and the Section's stake in future programs. In addition to this statement, the subcommittee

also agreed to focus on the following areas over the next several months:

- Survey nuclear medicine advanced associate (NMAA) graduates concerning practice issues, etc.
- Schedule future meetings with stakeholders who are experienced in accrediting educational programs to ensure the consistency of clinical experiences
- Begin identifying strategies for continued advocacy and increasing awareness of the NMAA
- Publish a white paper focused on the growing need for technologists and molecular imaging professionals in clinical research
- Create a new section of *Uptake* highlighting technologists working in research and clinical trial settings



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In addition to the progress made by the graduate-level curriculum subcommittee, the TAB also discussed the growing need for additional education focal areas and innovative methods for delivering this education to technologists. TAB members identified the following topics as critical areas to address educational gaps over the next year:

- CT
- Targeted radionuclide therapy
- MR imaging
- Neurodegenerative and neuropsychiatric disease imaging
- Cardiovascular disease imaging
- Advances in oncologic imaging

TAB members began outlining proposed curricula for the areas noted above and agreed to have the CT and neurology areas finalized by the beginning of the summer. In addition, cardiology and MR imaging will be finalized by the end of 2014.

These educational offerings will include all spectrums of the field—entry level to advanced. They can be completed separately or in sequence and will provide technologists with opportunities to participate in live, face-to-face meetings or online courses.

These 2 important initiatives will help to ensure that our members are prepared for the ARRT continuing-qualification-requirements deadline of 2021 and the new NMTCB CT exam. These initiatives will also guide the SNMMI-TS through the changing marketplace and the growing need to be multicredentialed while ensuring that educational pathways for the field are advanced.

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