

NMTCB REPORT

George W. Alexander, Jr., CNMT, Chairman

Since the formation of the Technologist Section of the Society of Nuclear Medicine in 1970, nuclear medicine technologists have had an interest in being involved in certification activities and the establishment of a professional identity separate from any other allied health profession. There was a strong belief that nuclear medicine technologists should control their professional destiny by involvement in the development of standards for education and certification. Every President of the Technologist Section between 1970 and 1976 participated in discussions to bring about increased nuclear medicine technologist involvement in the credentialing system. Up to 1976, no nuclear medicine technologists were directly involved with policy decision nor standards setting. At the national and state levels, nuclear medicine technologists were facing licensure issues without a clear professional identity or a clearly defined scope of practice. Beginning in 1976, the message was loud and clear—it was time for nuclear medicine technologists to take control of their professional destiny.

At the National Council meeting of the Technologist Section—The Society of Nuclear Medicine in Dallas, Texas on June 9, 1976, the following resolution was passed: "Resolve that we are in support of the concept of an independent nuclear medicine technology examination board established under the auspices of the Technologist Section, The Society of Nuclear Medicine. Further be it resolved that a committee be appointed to explore fully the implementation of an independent nuclear medicine technology examination board and that the committee report its findings to the National Council at its next meeting."

A task force was appointed by the President of the Technologist Section that included Mark Muilenberg, Jim Langan, Barbara Horton, Sue Weiss, Jim Kellner, Anthony Mazzola, George Alexander, Violet Custer, Joan Herbst, Glen Moran, and Sue Schlegel. This task force had its work cut out. Within the next 12 months, they decided that an independent examination board was feasible and affordable. Nuclear medicine technologist's labors for an independent certification agency were brought to fruition when the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) was incorporated in June 1977 and the first NMTCB exam was administered in September 1978. During 1986, the Technologist Section and the NMTCB are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the founding of the task force to implement an independent nuclear medicine technology examination board.

The NMTCB has shown sustained growth because of the support of the examination by the nuclear medicine community. Additionally, invaluable contributions have been made in the areas of item writing, advisory council participation, and board member nomination and election. The cornerstone of NMTCB success, however, lies in the Board of Director's com-

mitment to reaching the founding goals through the development and administration of a reliable and valid certification exam. From the start, the Board has endeavored to meet the founding goals established by the Technologist Section. The first two goals were: 1) the establishment of an independent certification agency responsible to the profession; and 2) certification of nuclear medicine technologists by professionals within the field of nuclear medicine. These two goals were realized when the NMTCB was incorporated in June 1977. The third founding goal was to establish a separate professional identity for nuclear medicine technologists. Individuals certified by NMTCB are designated as "Certified Nuclear Medicine Technologists" and use the professional abbreviation "CNMT."

National recognition has been gained by the active role taken by the NMTCB in the promulgation of certification standards for nuclear medicine technologists. The NMTCB has worked closely with other associated professional groups as well as state and federal agencies in the development of standards, and there is every indication that the NMTCB has assumed a leading role in the certification of nuclear medicine technologists and the establishment of certification standards. All of the efforts at the state and national level have culminated in the recognition of NMTCB as a national standard for the certification of nuclear medicine technologists. This in turn has helped to identify nuclear medicine technology as a separate specialty and has firmly established the "CNMT" credential. The fourth and primary founding goal was the establishment of high professional standards for nuclear medicine technology. As a leader in the setting of standards of performance for nuclear medicine technologists, the NMTCB is committed to providing procedures for verifying that professionals involved in the practice of nuclear medicine technology possess acceptable levels of subject matter expertise. How well the NMTCB has been able to meet this commitment may be evaluated by reviewing the NMTCB's certification program and the examination performance to date.

During these last 10 years, the NMTCB has accomplished all objectives and goals as requested by the Technologist Section. The work of many dedicated individuals including nuclear medicine technologists, physicians, and physicists have made this possible. The NMTCB has participated in the elevation of standards of education in nuclear medicine technology, determined the entry-level competency of nuclear medicine technologists by establishing qualifications, arranging, controlling and conducting examinations, and testing the qualification of voluntary candidates. In addition, the NMTCB has granted and issued certificates in nuclear medicine technology to voluntary applicants who have been qualified by the Board, maintained a registry of holders of such certificates, and serves

the public by furnishing lists of practitioners who have been certified by the Board, and has encouraged and improved the study and practice of nuclear medicine technology.

In summary, the NMTCB has enjoyed phenomenal success and our certification program has reached a high level of sophistication in a very short period of time. From the start, the NMTCB Directors were determined to meet the founding goals established by the Technologist Section in 1976. Nuclear medicine technologists took control of their professional destiny when the decision was made to establish the NMTCB.

Dedication and a lot of hard work have made the NMTCB a reality. The outstanding quality of the NMTCB's certification program and its success since its inception represent what an organization or group of individuals can accomplish if there is a true commitment to the ideal. Currently, the NMTCB has approximately 9,200 certificants. The profession can feel proud of the NMTCB, born from the foresight and initiative within our own profession and dedicated to "certification of nuclear medicine technologists by nuclear medicine technologists."