

When was the last time someone asked you, "What does CNMT behind your name mean?" Your reply, of course, was "Certified Nuclear Medicine Technologist." Then, if the person was not familiar with the medical field and brave enough to ask another question of you, it was probably something like, "What does that mean?" This second question perhaps caused some reflection on your part. What does it mean to a Certified Nuclear Medicine Technologist? Perhaps immediately following that thought was another: Why would a person choose to become certified in nuclear medicine technology?

In today's society it is popular practice to put initials behind one's name. Hopefully for most of us in nuclear medicine technology, simply to put initials behind our names is not the reason for becoming certified. To be certified by the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) signifies to our co-workers, employers, and the patients that we serve that we have attained a certain level of knowledge and possess a level of skills to be recognized as a certified entry level technologist. This level of knowledge and skills has been determined by other professionals currently working in the field of nuclear medicine technology, and is accomplished through task validation studies and use of expert opinion. This level of knowledge and skills covers all areas of nuclear medicine practice—radiation safety, radiopharmacy, instrumentation, patient care, imaging, and non-imaging procedures. These areas are constantly evaluated to ensure that the NMTCB examination does, in fact, reflect state-of-the-art practices. It must be kept in mind that the examination should represent practice at a national level, as opposed to regionalized practice, and that it is at an entry level of technology. Validation studies test these two aspects of the exam.

Upon further reflection, a person would realize that certification by the NMTCB means that the certificant has met the necessary educational requirements. The certificant may have graduated from a Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA)-approved Nuclear Medicine Technology program, he or she may have qualified by an alternative route with a B.S. degree in science, or he or she may have completed an on-the-job training (OJT) period of six years of fulltime experience. As has been published previously in this journal, this latter method of qualifying for the exam has been abolished, as of January 1, 1987. OJT must have already begun by that date to be recognized as an approved qualifying

route. Therefore, certification not only says something about the level of knowledge and skills of the technologist, but also says something about a person's educational background.

Thirdly, certification has something to say about the respect technologists have for their professional status. A certified technologist has been willing to put forth the extra time, effort, and expense it requires to successfully complete a certification examination. It does, in fact, require extra time and effort to prepare and review the material for the exam, besides just sitting to take the exam.

The NMTCB provides a registration service which annually registers all active technologists certified by the NMTCB. Annual dues are levied for this registration function. Until recently, the NMTCB has stipulated that if an inactive certificant wished to reactivate his or her registration, he or she would be required to pay the current year's dues plus all the previous years' unpaid dues. This, no doubt, could amount to a considerable sum of money.

The NMTCB, however, recognizes how important certification can be for technologists. Therefore, the Board, at a recent meeting, made a significant change and modified this policy. For a limited period of time, the above outlined procedure is not being used. Beginning September 1, 1987 an inactive certificant can reactivate their status by merely paying a \$15.00 reactivation fee plus the current year's dues. This offers a unique and attractive opportunity for inactive persons to reactivate their status and again gain all the privileges that active status carries. If you are inactive with the NMTCB, I would urge you to take advantage of this policy change. For the exact details of this procedure, write to the NMTCB office at P.O. Box 806, Tucker, GA 30085. If you know fellow co-workers or colleagues who have left their active status slip, tell them of this opportunity and encourage them to again become active with the NMTCB. They can again use CNMT behind their name. All current and active technologists registered with the NMTCB will have their names printed in the annual directory. In addition, there are some planned additions to the NMTCB program which only active members will be able to take advantage of.

What does CNMT mean to you? Hopefully, it represents a sense of accomplishment for you, a level of expertise gained, and a pride in your profession. Become active, stay active, and contribute your expertise to your chosen career field.