

## TWENTY YEARS AND GROWING

In June 1985, readers had the opportunity to "Glimpse into the Past" (*J Nucl Med Technol* 1985;2:110-112) and review the historical progress of the Technologist Section from its early inception through its 15th anniversary.

The foundation of the Section can be traced to two separate groups that were formed to provide the technologist community with an avenue for the exchange of current information and ideas in the field of nuclear medicine technology. The first group, based in Chicago, formed the Society of Nuclear Medicine Technologists in May 1965. This group grew to an impressive 382 members over the next three years and provided the technologist community with three successful scientific programs. The second group, based in Houston and ultimately to become the Southwestern Chapter—Technologist Section, was formed in August 1966 and provided the permanent basis for development of the Technologist Section.

The development of the National Council can be traced during this same time period when technologist representatives were appointed by physicians from various chapters to serve as committee members for the Subcommittee on Technologist Affairs.

In its infancy, the goals of the Technologist Section were unclear; the needs of the yet to be defined membership were unknown. The appointed leadership of the Section had the formidable task of "starting from the beginning" on a shoestring budget of \$1,000. In the first 11 months, 737 applications were approved for charter membership and in June 1971, the first business meeting of the Section was held in Los Angeles, California.

In the following years, significant activities were identified to address the needs of the membership, including dissemination of education information and technical competency issues.

Communication with the membership was essential to maintaining the viability of the Section. In response to this need, a communication link for national and scientific information was established

for the membership via the *Technologist Section Newsletter* and the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology*.

The committee on Continuing Education addressed educational needs of the membership initially by improving the teaching sessions at the Annual meeting and by implementing a separate scientific program for the Section, the Winter Meeting. Unfortunately, budget considerations forced the discontinuation of the program in 1987.

To insure conformance with accepted educational standards and to provide the membership with a method to record and report educational activities, the Verification of Involvement in Continuing Education (VOICE) was created. Additionally, the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board was created in 1978 to certify the competence of the technologist community.

This brief review of the Section's first 15 years illustrates a remarkable metamorphosis from the infant organization struggling to identify the goals and needs of its membership to a maturing young adult organization successfully addressing the complexities of the technology of nuclear medicine as it relates to the medical industry.

From 1985 to 1990, the Section embarked upon many projects to address issues facing technologists, particularly the manpower shortage. Moreover, the Section's growth can be seen in the implementation of a strategic plan, which outlined short- and long-term goals and objectives. A summary of some of these activities is presented below.

The Diagnostic Related Groups (DRGs) survey, the Prospective Payment System (PPS) survey, the Human Resource survey, and the Technologist Salary survey conducted by the Section as well as the AHRA Workload (Radworks) study have provided both the Society, other health care organizations, and governmental agencies with invaluable data.

The dedicated work of the Section's membership and leadership resulted in the implementation of Nuclear Medi-

cine Week in 1986. The event, which is celebrated annually, provides the medical community and the general public with information on the advances that nuclear medicine has made in the diagnosis and treatment of disease.

In 1987, it was obvious that technologists were being cross-trained to serve in a "multi-purpose" capacity in many institutions. To identify the needs of this group, the Task Force on Multiple Competency was formed. The goals of the group were to define the concept of multi-competency and to suggest appropriate training criteria.

Continuous legislative and regulatory actions affecting the professions mandated the development of a mechanism to keep the membership abreast of governmental activities. The publication of the Legislative Newsletter in 1988 and its subsequent editions provides the membership with current information on legislative and regulatory items.

In response to the manpower shortage, the Section joined the Summit on Manpower, a confederation comprised of seventeen radiologic-related professional organizations to develop strategies for coping with the shortage of qualified technologists. The Section has also developed its own marketing plan for the retention and recruitment of technologists and is working in concert with industry through the formation of technologist advisory committees to address technologist-related issues.

The Section's involvement in socioeconomic affairs has had significant impact. Successful lobbying on the part of the Section and other allied health organizations resulted in congressional passage of Title VII of the Public Health Service Act.

A review of the Section's accomplishments over the last five years would be incomplete without including the efforts of a very caring individual, Virginia Pappas, CAE, Associate Executive Director of the Society and Technologist Section Administrator. Without Virginia's assistance, many of these successful projects would still be in the "thinking" stage.

In reviewing the past 20 years, I have highlighted only a few of the Section's important accomplishments; space permitting, the list could go on and on. The Section's growth, however, has been remarkable. Credit for this must be ex-

tended to the continued dedication of each active member who has donated valuable time and effort. With the continued support of its membership, the Section can look forward to further prosperity in this new decade and on into

the new century. We are 20 years old and still growing.

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