

The Times They Are A Changing



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Bob Dylan's song couldn't be more appropriate than it is today, especially in health care! For those of you who are too young to remember Bob Dylan, ask your parents. The pressure for change seems to increase on a daily basis, and it is beginning to affect all aspects of our professional lives. Many times the changes are painful and require difficult adjustments. Usually, change is for the better, but it is difficult for us to see it when we are so directly involved. There are several big changes that we need to cope with on a fairly immediate basis. We need to approach these as opportunities for improvement and to provide as much input as we can into the process.

The first big change is relocation of the Society office. The SNM central office staff will soon begin to prepare for the move. A site is being sought in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Obviously, this will necessitate some changes both in personnel and in the way we operate. This is an opportunity for us to take a look at the who, what, why, where, and how we accomplish the business of the Technologist Section. I'm sure that we can find ways to streamline some of our processes. Maybe we can find more effective ways of carrying out our business.

The second big change is the reorganization of the Society. The Board of Trustees voted at the SNM Annual Meeting in June to approve the draft bylaws in concept and to authorize the Committee to proceed with preparation of the final documents to be voted upon at the next meeting of the Board. The Technologist Section is being given the opportunity to provide much more input into the operation of the Society through greater representation on the Society's governing bodies. The challenge for the Technologist Section is to devise a method of selecting our representation that will directly reflect the wishes of the membership.

The major reason that the Society has elected to change is to enhance its ability to carry out its business in between meetings of the Board. The new structure will provide for a much smaller group, which can meet more often and address issues as they arise. This will allow the Society to respond more quickly to issues and problems.

The Technologist Section is hampered by the same problem. That is, since the National Council is the policy-making body, all decisions must wait until the National Council meets, which is only twice a year. Perhaps, it is time for us to begin thinking of restructuring the Section as well, to streamline our way of doing business. The issues to which we will need to respond will be more urgent over the next couple of years as the Clinton administration pressures the health care industry to change. We need to be able to respond to those pressures as quickly as possible. Another concern is that we are beginning to see a reduction in the availability of travel funds, which limits the number of individuals who can attend business meetings, as well as the scientific sessions. We need to address these issues. Think about ways that the Section can operate more efficiently and communicate your ideas to your elected representatives. If the Technologist Section is going to grow and remain viable, we need to make adequate provision for the governance of the Section.

The accreditation system also is changing so rapidly that it is difficult to keep up with the changes on a day to day basis. The American Medical Association (AMA) suddenly decided to get out of the business of accrediting allied health education programs through its Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA). At the same time, the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation (COPA), the group that recognized CAHEA, decided to vote itself out of business as well. All of this has left the Joint Review Committee on Educational Programs in Nuclear Medicine Technology (JRCNMT) in a quandary. A new agency has been proposed by a task force appointed by the AMA, and the JRCNMT will decide at its meeting in October whether or not it wishes to join the new agency. Other proposals will be forthcoming in the near future. We, as individual technologists, need to be concerned about the system that produces future technologists and to assist the JRCNMT in choosing the right path.

There is an old saying that the more things change, the more they stay the same. I don't think that is true anymore and the changes are coming faster and faster. We need to be prepared to deal with them as they occur.