

## MESSAGE FROM THE P R E S I D E N T

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Each year as you write your check to the Society of Nuclear Medicine to renew your membership, you make a conscious choice to continue your involvement in an organization that specializes in nuclear medicine. For each of us, the perceived benefits of membership are different. For some, membership provides an opportunity to meet educational requirements for renewal of state licenses or national registration. For others, it is an opportunity to meet and socialize with peers. Still others perceive a benefit in the continuous flow of information regarding new techniques, radiopharmaceuticals and equipment or changes in government regulations, reimbursement issues and managed care. And for others, it is an opportunity to share in the common good of the profession. This shared experience may be as a leader in the organization or as an educator in the community. Whatever your reasons are, your continued commitment to the organization illustrates that you have found one or more benefits that meet your needs—benefits that *you* perceive as valuable.

So I would like to ask you, “When was the last time you shared the reason that you belong to the Society of Nuclear Medicine with a co-worker or other nuclear medicine technologist? When was the last time you shared information about the benefits of membership that *you* find valuable?”

I’ve heard the question asked many times, “Why don’t more technologists belong to the SNM-TS? There are approximately 15,000 nuclear medicine technologists registered by the NMTCB and less than half of those technologists belong to the Society of Nuclear Medicine. Why?” The reason may be simple: (1) they don’t know about the organization, (2) they don’t know anyone in the organization, or (3) they don’t know why they should belong to the SNM-TS.

So I repeat my question, “When was the last time that you told a co-worker or other nuclear medicine technologist why you are a member of the Society of Nuclear Medicine?” When was the last time you shared how to meet continuing education requirements through articles in *JNMT*, or rented videotapes that provide VOICE credit or attended a local, state, chapter, regional or national meeting? And when was the last time you shared with your co-workers the amount of money that you save by attending those educational programs as a member? When was the last time that you shared a new technique or bit of information that you learned from other SNM-TS members or through publications provided by the organization?

Now don’t get excited. I’m not an ostrich. I don’t live with my head in the sand. I know there is a flip side to this coin. Many nuclear medicine technologists are familiar with the organization, know some of the benefits of membership and choose to participate in local groups rather than the national organization. Their reasons for this choice are varied. Dues are too expensive. They can belong to a local group for less than

one-quarter of the dues charged by the SNM. They don’t care about discounts to chapter, regional or national meetings because they can’t get the time off and their hospital won’t pay for the meeting anyway. Their spouse belongs to the SNM-TS so they don’t need duplicates of everything. They don’t have time to read the journal(s) so they don’t want to pay for something they don’t want. They don’t care about continuing education or CEU tracking because their state doesn’t require it. They can get more CEU credits from the “brand x” journal than they can from *JNMT* and the dues are cheaper. Or all they want is someone to keep track of their CEUs and they don’t want to pay so much just to have their credits tallied and get a yearly report.

These are credible reasons for not belonging to the Society of Nuclear Medicine. They clearly illustrate the concept that I mentioned earlier, members perceive benefits differently. So the question becomes, “Is there a membership package that’s right for everyone?” Clearly one does not exist today. However, that void may be filled in the near future.

At the mid-winter meeting of the Society of Nuclear Medicine, the National Council—*your* voice in the national organization—discussed a new concept in membership: benefit-specific menu-driven membership categories. This discussion was based on information obtained from the recent member/non-member survey distributed to nuclear medicine technologists across the country. This survey attempted to identify specific reasons why technologists choose to belong or not belong to the SNM-TS. The reasons listed above highlight the primary reasons technologists do not belong to the SNM-TS. They are factors that continue to limit membership in the national organization. Clearly some of the needs of the technologist community are not being met. Changes in the work environment restrict the technologist’s ability to attend educational meetings or, in some cases, to afford membership. Some current member benefits are not perceived as valuable to nonmember technologists. From this survey, the leadership determined that it was time for a *major* change. Over the next several months you will learn about the planned restructuring of our membership categories. However, unlike the concept of restructuring within our hospitals which has the same connotation as a four-letter word, the restructuring of the membership categories will help each member to purchase only those benefits that they perceive as valuable to them. It is a bold step in our organization, one that we hope will be seen as valuable by our current and future members.

So I ask you again, “When was the last time you discussed the Society of Nuclear Medicine with a fellow nuclear medicine technologist?”

As always, I encourage your comments, questions and suggestions. I can be reached by phone at 626-301-8269, or by e-mail at [kthomas@smtplink.coh.org](mailto:kthomas@smtplink.coh.org).