

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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I have belonged to the Society of Nuclear Medicine–Technologist Section (SNM-TS) my entire career. Once I was certified, my supervisor came to me with an application. She said I was a professional now and professionals belong to professional organizations. I had *no idea* what she was talking about, but I *knew* I was a professional so I joined.

Fast forward to 1998, I find myself as president of the SNM-TS. One of the biggest joys, I was told, and am quickly finding out, is to spend time with other technologists from all over the globe. My most recent experience was in Berlin, the site of the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) annual meeting. Their technologist committee is responsible for an educational track similar to our educational offerings at our national meeting. They also use this setting as an opportunity to conduct their business.

I learned there are so many similarities between our foreign technologist counterparts and us. Even though their health care funding is drastically different from ours (the various governments pay for health care services), they are always confronted with doing more with less. They feel they are not recognized for the value that they bring to the patient. They want to assure that only the most qualified person is performing nuclear medicine technology and, to that end, they are concerned about proper certification.

European technologists want to be formally recognized by the EANM. Currently they are loosely affiliated, but understand that their credibility and professional status would be enhanced with formal recognition and inclusion in the EANM. They understand that there is strength in numbers.

Their fellow technologists count on them to provide high-quality, relevant, low-cost educational programs. Most of their committee work is devoted to doing just that. However, their challenge is nothing like ours. They need to decide on the language of the program. That debate was an eye opener for an American who only speaks English.

When I reflect on the SNM-TS initiatives, there is not much difference. We are highly committed to achieving national licensure. What this really means is that each state must require some means of assuring that all those who work within the scope of practice of nuclear medicine technology will at least meet minimum standards. This in turn will help assure that high-quality images are presented for interpretation.

The SNM-TS has been and continues to be a catalyst in the

formalized development of the allied health professional. This group of health care workers represents the majority of all who work in the healing arts. Because of this group's fragmentation, little has been done at the national level to achieve recognition of their skills and the untapped resources that these skills represent. The successes of the American Medical Association and the American Nursing Association have been achieved because of the large numbers of professionals these organizations represent and the focus on core competencies and the value that these qualifications bring to health care. These organizations do not and *do not want* to represent specialties. If the allied health professions were able to put aside their differences and focus on their commonalities,

of which there are many, all of our collective voices would be heard. The patient could be better served and health care costs would be reduced.

In every survey the SNM-TS has taken, both members and nonmembers state their number one need is continuing education. All realize that, because the field of nuclear medicine technology is extremely dynamic, current information is imperative for continued success. Many committees of the SNM-TS are devoted to providing a wide range of educational offerings. Our first annual Summer School was a success and undoubtedly will become an eagerly awaited annual event.

Our European counterparts face an even bigger challenge than language and cultural differences. A small group of dedicated professionals is committed to achieving the lofty goals that their peers have asked of them. They all realize that it is essential to reach them, but few are willing to commit the time and energy to make it happen. In this they also are similar to us. One of the SNM-TS's biggest challenges is to recruit new individuals who will volunteer their time and energy in moving the section forward to achieve the goals that our members have mandated. Maybe it is because we live in different times. Maybe it is because Generation X has different values. But maybe it is as simple as the fact that not everyone has a supervisor that tells him or her that they are a professional and, as such, professionals support their professional organization so that it can support them.

If you would like to get involved, become a member, or suggest better ways to service our membership, please send an e-mail to me at Roy@CSHS.org. I look forward to hearing from you.