

SNM Mid-Winter Meeting and Educational Symposium

The SNM 2006 Mid-Winter Educational Symposium, which will be held February 11–12 in Tempe, AZ, promotes innovation and provides appropriate scope credits for California technologists and Category A credits for technologists credentialed by the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB) or the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT).

The Technologist Section program runs from 2–5 PM on Saturday (February 11) and continues from 8 AM–1 PM on Sunday (February 12), requiring only a one-night stay in Tempe. David Gilmore, CNMT, RT(R)(N), opens the technologist program with “Truly Understanding MPI—Not Just Pushing the Buttons.” April Mann, CNMT, RT(N), FSNMITS, addresses “Myocardial Perfusion: Moving From SPECT to PET.” Martha W. Pickett, CNMT, FSNMITS, introduces “Advanced Practice—A New Career Ladder in Nuclear Medicine Technology.”

Paul E. Christian, CNMT, informs the 8 PM. Sunday early risers about “Instrumentation in PET/CT.” Nancy M. Swanston, CNMT, PET, RT(N), addresses “Radiation Safety and Patient Protocols in PET/CT,” while Susan M. Minerich, CNMT, presents “PET Applications in Radiation Therapy Planning and Assessing Treatment Response.” Vanessa L. Gates, MS, discusses “⁹⁰Y Radioembolization for the Treatment of Hepatocellular Carcinoma and Metastatic Disease to the Liver.” Frances L. Neagley, CNMT, FSNMITS, ends the technologist program with “⁶⁷Ga—Tried and True.”

The much-requested CT workshop will be offered at the 2006 Annual Meeting in San Diego. This 3-day workshop will be held June 3–5 and will cover CT anatomy, physics and radiation safety issues directed to the nuclear medicine technologist who anticipates sitting for the advanced prac-

tice examination in CT offered by ARRT.

Those who want or need more continuing education in Tempe, can take advantage of programs offered by members of SNM’s PET and Molecular Imaging Centers of Excellence and the Cardiovascular, Nuclear Oncology, Radiopharmaceutical Sciences, and Computer and Instrumentation Councils that are being presented from 9:30 AM–1 PM and from 6–9 PM on Saturday.

To learn more about the Mid-Winter Educational Symposium, go online to www.snm.org/mwm. The entire program is posted online, along with information on registration and housing at Wyndham Buttes.

Eileen O. Smith, MBA, CNMT

Technologists Urged to Submit Abstracts for Presentation at SNM Annual Meeting

The Society of Nuclear Medicine Annual Meeting, June 3–7, 2006, in San Diego, CA, presents a perfect opportunity for technologists and student technologists to share the results of research and improvements in technique that can benefit others in the profession. The meeting also offers attendees the chance to attend scientific presentations by leading researchers from around the world and to network with colleagues and friends. Presenting your own research gives technologists and student technologists the opportunity to win recognition for their institution as well as financial awards.

Both SNMITS members and non-members may submit abstracts and are eligible for awards. A nuclear medicine technologist must be the presenting author of an abstract to be eligible for submission in the following six abstract categories:

- **Cardiovascular track (basic and clinical, cardiac PET):** Investigations of camera, computer, and radiopharmaceutical developments;

new methods for analysis and technical aspects of established nuclear medicine/PET procedures specific to the clinical assessment of the cardiovascular system.

- **Neurology track (basic and clinical, PET):** Investigations of camera, computer, and radiopharmaceutical developments; new methods for analysis and technical aspects of established nuclear medicine procedures/PET procedures specific to the clinical assessment of the central nervous system and neuropsychiatric disorders.
- **Instrumentation and Data Analysis (instrumentation and analysis, SPECT and PET):** Investigations of new developments, existing applications, and performance and evaluation of nuclear medicine instrumentation and methods and programs available for data analysis specific to SPECT, PET, or neither.
- **Radiopharmaceuticals (dosimetry/radiation biology, radiopharmaceutical chemistry, radiation safety):** Investigations of radiation dosimetry and biology, labeled compounds that have not been extensively reported and radiation safety as it pertains to diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine procedures.
- **General clinical (bone/joint, endocrinology, gastroenterology, hematology/infectious disease, pediatrics, pulmonary, renal):** Investigations of camera, computer and radiopharmaceutical developments; new methods for analysis and technical aspects of established nuclear medicine procedures specific to the clinical assessment of bone/joint pathology, therapy, and endocrine disease processes, the hepatobiliary and gastrointestinal tract, the pediatric population, the pulmonary system, renal disease processes, and hematologic and infectious disease processes.
- **Oncology (basic and clinical, PET, therapy):** Investigations of camera, computer and radiopharmaceutical developments; new methods for

analysis and technical aspects of established nuclear medicine/PET procedures specific to the clinical assessment of oncology disease processes; technical and clinical investigations of therapeutic oncology radiopharmaceuticals.

All submitted abstracts are reviewed and graded by qualified SNM Technologist Section members on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). Judging criteria for abstract acceptance includes scientific merit (development of a new or improved diagnostic procedure or idea); organization (easy to follow and understand); practicality (available, logical, feasible or easy to incorporate into clinical practice); presentation (clear; shows understanding of subject matter; provides clinical insight); and technical quality (data support conclusions). SNM recognizes first-, second- and third-place awards for both oral and poster presentations with plaques and monetary gifts. In addition, SNM's Cardiovascular and Brain Imaging Councils present monetary awards to technologists.

Accepted abstracts may be presented orally or by poster presentation at the Annual Meeting. Technologist posters are typically presented in poster sessions, which require the author to be present at the meeting. Accepted abstracts are published in SNM publications, including the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine Technology* and the *Journal of Nuclear Medicine's Abstract Book Supplement*.

Authors can easily submit abstracts online; applicants will be asked to complete 4 areas of information: objectives, methods, results and conclusions. The deadline for technologists to submit abstracts is January 10, 2006; the deadline for technologist students is January 31, 2006.

By attending and presenting at this national forum, you have the opportunity to stay up-to-date with the latest technology and to grow as professionals. For more information, go online to www.snm.org/am, or contact Anthony Gary, SNM education program manager, agary@snm.org, 703-708-9000, ext. 1212.

Anthony Gary
SNM Education Program Manager

VOICE BOX: Changes to VOICE Guidelines

Change in Attendance Verification Methods

SNM has been using an honor system for recording CE credits by attendees at large meetings approved for CE credit. The credit-reporting form required all attendees to check the sessions attended at a meeting with multiple offerings. A copy of the form was given to SNM as verification of attendance, and the attendee credits were entered into SNM's database. This process of self-reporting was problematic and can no longer be accepted because CE sponsors cannot verify that the attendee was present at each session claimed on the credit-reporting form. The ARRT's 2005 CE Policies that were effective July 1, 2005 stipulate that a sponsor should not allow participants to self-report or track their attendance at CE activities. Beginning January 1, 2006, SNM will not accept self-reporting CE credit forms. Instead, SNM is implementing a new credit reporting process in 2006 at the Mid-Winter and Annual Meetings. Below are the methods that will be used for attendance verification.

Mid-Winter Meeting: SNM will provide an attendance verification form that can be stamped on session entry and exit. If a participant comes more than 15 minutes late for a session, the form will not be stamped because the attendee will not have met the guideline for attendance/participation.

Annual Meeting: SNM will provide a CE session tracker scan card for each attendee registered for the Annual Meeting. The attendee can swipe the card as they enter and exit each session. If an attendee comes more than 15 minutes late for a categorical or 10 minutes late for a CE session, he/she will not have met the guideline for attendance/participation. In the case of activities lasting less than 50 minutes, an attendee who is late, whether it is 2 minutes or 10 minutes, or leaves early, no CE credit will be given. Using scan cards, the categoricals/CE courses attended will be tracked for creating certificates for SNM nonmembers and

recording CE credits onto a member's VOICE transcript. The tracking reports with each attendee's name and course name will speed the data entry process and create fewer errors on transcripts and CE certificates.

SNM Member Speaker/Author Application Fee

SNM members will not have to pay a fee when they submit VOICE applications for speaker/author credit. Nonmembers will pay a \$5.00 fee.

VOICE Application Submission Deadlines

Because of the high volume of VOICE applications being submitted, SNM will no longer evaluate or approve VOICE applications received less than 4 weeks before the activity is to take place.

CE Credit for CPR Classes

Beginning January 1, 2007, CE credit for basic CPR classes will not be added to transcripts. The ARRT rationale is that basic CPR is a job responsibility not a continuing education activity.

Increase in VOICE Application Fees

To offset the administrative costs for processing VOICE applications, there has been an increase of \$15.00 in the application fees for the following program types:

- Chapter/regional/academic/hospital/local group-sponsored programs, less than 1 day in length;
- Chapter/regional/academic/hospital/local group-sponsored programs, one full day or more in length;
- Commercial company-sponsored programs; and
- Multiple programs discounted for sponsors applying for up to 6 programs within a 6-month period.

To review an updated copy of the VOICE Guidelines, visit the Education section of the SNM Web site at www.snm.org, and click VOICE. You may also contact Jannine Henderson at jhenderson@snm.org or 703-708-9000 ext. 1210 or Kelly Aldridge at kaldridge@snm.org or 703-708-9000 ext. 1247.

ARRT Expands Supporting Categories For Post-Primary Certification to Include NMTCB Certification

Recognizing the increasing specialization of the profession and eager to provide the pathways for getting there, the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) has expanded its list of primary certifications that serve as supporting categories for postprimary certifications.

“One in 3 of today’s Registered Technologists hold postprimary certificates,” according to Jerry B. Reid, PhD, ARRT executive director. “And that ratio is likely to grow as the profession continues to evolve.”

ARRT has incorporated credentials beyond its own into the supporting category structure. For nuclear medicine technology, the supporting certification can be from ARRT or the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB). For sonography, it can be from ARRT or the American Registry for Diagnostic Medical Sonography (ARDMS). Nuclear medicine technology certification supports

the following postprimary certifications: bone densitometry, CT, MRI, quality management, sonography and vascular sonography.

CMS Releases 2006 HCPCS level II Annual Update

On October 27, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) released the 2006 Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System (HCPCS) level II code set. This file contains more than 60 changes for nuclear medicine radiopharmaceuticals and drugs, which will become effective January 1, 2006.

The SNM Coding and Reimbursement Working Group was active in working with CMS in modifying the code set relating to radiopharmaceuticals. The working group began this HCPCS level II project more than 2 years ago. The project goal was to bring consistency and structure to radiopharmaceutical codes, based on both current medical practices and facilities purchase practices. “It has been a lot of collaboration, education, and hard work for both the CMS HCPCS

working group and the SNM Coding and Reimbursement working group members,” said Denise Merlino, SNM coding adviser and a key contributor to the project. “I believe both groups worked together toward the common goal. It was a unique experience with results well worth the effort. I would also like to commend the CMS working group for their successful implementation of a new, more transparent HCPCS process,” she added.

The 2006 HCPCS cycle was the first in which the medical communities were allowed a “sneak peak” into the HCPCS working group’s proposed changes. The nuclear medicine community was given this preview in June 2005, which provided time for public comment, an important element in the revised HCPCS process.

The SNM will prepare educational materials with these 2006 HCPCS level II requirements and will post these in the practice management section of the SNM Web site in the near future. The complete file containing the 2006 HCPCS Annual Update can be accessed at: www.cms.hhs.gov/providers/pufdownload/anhpcddl.asp.