

# The Bigger Picture

The evolution of nuclear medicine into molecular imaging will significantly impact nuclear medicine technologists over the next decade.

Researchers are now examining the molecular-level characteristics of diseases and exploring new ways to manage and treat illnesses. With continual advances being made in molecular biology and medical imaging, the potential of molecular imaging to provide new insights, treatments, and diagnostic methods is enormous and will considerably affect the health care of our patients.

As molecular imaging becomes a significant force in clinical practice, the imaging community will assume an expanded role in medical care. SNMTS technologists will be part of this bigger picture. We are—both now and in the future—an essential part of the molecular imaging community.

Over the next few years, SNMTS will shape and define its role in molecular imaging, especially in light of the society's new core purpose: To improve health care by advancing molecular imaging and therapy. SNMTS knows the importance—and value—of developing well-rounded technologists who can work in PET/CT, SPECT/CT, research, and information technology and who understand cross-sectional anatomy, contrast media, and instrumentation. We want to help develop a curriculum to prepare technologists to take advantage of the opportunities offered by these advances in molecular imaging. SNMTS leaders will exam-



ine current nuclear medicine programs at an educational summit this fall.

SNMTS is taking the lead in determining how nuclear medicine technologists of today may broaden their scope to become the imaging specialists or molecular imaging technologists of the future. This is our responsibility to our current and future members. The Technologist Section supports baccalaureate degree entry-level requirements for nuclear medicine technologists and the development of a master's degree-level nuclear medicine practitioner program. We have held discussions with key stakeholders, including NMTCB and JRCNMT, to discuss implementation of certification and accreditation for nuclear medicine practitioners. Today, we can take our nuclear medicine backgrounds and become board certified in PET, CT, MRI, and hybrid imaging modalities to come. This is

a time when career doors are swinging open to nuclear medicine technologists as never before.

In a related step, the Technologist Section passed a resolution at SNM's 53rd Annual Meeting to expand the "Technologist" member description to include individuals working in affiliated careers, including researchers, educators, and related sciences. SNMTS wants to be the home for technologists of the future. To achieve this, SNMTS leaders want to provide additional classroom and online educational programs addressing emerging technologies. We will supplement existing programs with correlative and molecular imaging materials.

To help with this process, SNMTS leaders were active participants in the society's recent "Shaping the Future" molecular imaging summit. This summit brought together forward-thinking researchers, commercial sector representatives, and officials from national government and regulatory agencies to explore future technologies and possibilities to shape the future of patient health care. Participants were able to interact and ask questions about drug discovery, clinical issues, instrumentation, gene therapy, biomarkers, animal studies, basic research, and standardization and education.

Our bigger picture—based on working proactively and focusing on the society's new core purpose—will turn the power of possibility into success by opening a world of career opportunities to our members.