

Strategic Initiatives for the Year Ahead

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It is such an honor to serve as president of SNMMI-TS! The SNMMI 2016 annual meeting, which occurred in my hometown of San Diego, provided the perfect opportunity to launch plans for the year ahead. In reviewing the SNMMI-TS strategic plan, I realized that our work environment has changed significantly since June 2013, when the plan was written. I have therefore convened a strategic plan task force to more closely align our strategies with what is happening now and what is projected to happen in the future.

I have also organized a PET/MR task force charged with staying abreast of PET/MR changes as they relate to nuclear medicine technology. This group and the leadership team met with the Section for Magnetic Resonance Technologists to discuss collaborative opportunities and to review the PET/MR white paper that SNMMI and the Section created several years ago, which outlines training and educational requirements for PET/MR. Because the field has evolved since the white paper was written, we need to ensure that the educational goals we are moving toward are current. In this manner, nuclear medicine can be proactive instead of reactive.

In meeting with international colleagues, I noted that we all recognize that the role of PET/MR in nuclear medicine is unclear; we really do not know how big a factor it will become. Consequently, we are beginning a dialogue to ensure that we do not run into the educational challenges and licensure issues we encountered with the evolution of PET/CT.

The 2016–2017 committee chairs and I have worked together to establish an organized, coordinated effort for achieving our objectives. The advocacy group looked specifically at the progress made over the past 2 years and created a plan to continue our advocacy efforts. One area of focus will be scope-of-practice issues as they relate to infringement.

I would also like to address two issues that have come up recently from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals. One is the VA's proposed rule to amend title 38 of *Code of Federal Regulations*, part 17—specifically, §17.415(d)(1)(i)(B), which grants certified nurse practitioners full practice authority to “order, perform, supervise, and interpret laboratory and imaging studies.” SNMMI has submitted a letter to the VA (<http://snmmi.org/title38amendment>) opposing the granting of this authority. Certified nurse practitioners do not have the years of specialized training needed to perform and interpret nuclear medicine studies.

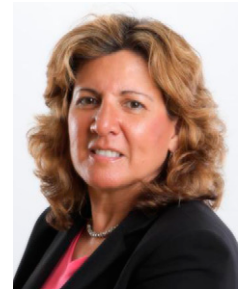
In addition, it has come to our attention that the VA is not allowing nuclear medicine technologists to perform diagnostic

CT, although they are allowed to do attenuation correction as part of a PET/CT or SPECT/CT procedure. This seems to be a human resources problem, not a scope-of-practice issue. The VA identifies PET as a nuclear medicine service but diagnostic CT as a radiology service. Because the functions required to perform these scans are currently under different job categories, a technologist with both nuclear medicine technologist and CT certification cannot practice both. The functions will need to be combined in the VA's job descriptions. SNMMI is working on this problem and will send the VA a letter explaining the concern. Because combined imaging systems are now vital diagnostic and therapeutic tools, this matter must be resolved as soon as possible. I will keep you posted.

Quality of care will always be our fundamental concern, and I continue to support the SNMMI-TS quality initiative as an overall program, with my specific focus being advocacy. Much of my time at the annual meeting was devoted to coordinating efforts to address infringements on our scope of practice. As I traveled the country this past year, one technologist after another approached me with cases of scope-of-practice infringement. This is a nationwide issue and a key focus for me. A quality initiative survey that was distributed over the summer will provide information about the nuclear medicine quality landscape.

I also have reconvened the technologist advisory board, but I have adjusted its charge. In the past, the board was utilized to complete small educational projects that required quick turnaround and did not fall within the charge of any other committee. The board will still be used in this manner as needed, but it is now also charged with reviewing educational efforts across all committees and advising me on areas of educational need. In this way, the technologist advisory board will become a true advisory board. I want to ensure that we are covering all the bases without duplicating efforts.

In the year ahead, I will travel to as many chapter meetings as I can. I look forward to visiting with you and hearing your concerns and ideas. We have much to accomplish this year, and I know we will be successful if we work together.



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