

Advancing Our Profession in Exciting and Challenging Times

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SNMMI-TS President

It has been such an honor to serve as SNMMI-TS president! This past year has been a whirlwind of activity, and I am pleased to report progress on many fronts that I outlined as priorities at the start of my presidency.

The final report on the quality initiative survey is published in this issue of *JNMT* and summarized in the *Uptake* newsletter. The committee is now working on a 3- to 5-year plan that will include...

- Working with the program, education, and continuing education committees to ensure that quality sessions are incorporated into the annual and mid-winter meeting programs
- Collaborating with other imaging organizations to incorporate nuclear medicine quality standards into program offerings
- Working with accreditation organizations to adopt quality awareness and end points/outcomes into standard workflow processes, as well as ensuring that quality and appropriate use training are part of technologists' continuing education
- Collaborating with educational programs and accrediting organizations to develop a quality program that will be part of the standardized curriculum for technologists in training
- Working with the advocacy committee to include quality-program monitoring in the scope of practice for technologists
- Working with certification bodies to incorporate quality definitions, processes, and theories into the knowledge base required for certification

The current SNMMI-TS strategic plan was created in 2013. With all the changes in the health care system and within our profession in recent years, it is time to create a new plan. The strategic plan task force will meet during the annual meeting to start developing specific goals and objectives.

In preparation for that meeting, we reached out to the National Council of Representatives (NCOR) for its input. Prior to the mid-winter meeting, NCOR members were asked to participate in a mega-issues survey and to rank issues in order of importance.

At the mid-winter meeting, the NCOR discussion of these issues addressed...

- The perceived value of nuclear medicine to cardiologists, referring physicians, and colleagues
- Ways to engage nonmember technologists and increase membership
- Collaboration with other organizations to improve education, certification, and accreditation
- Advocacy regarding scope of practice and reimbursement
- The role of SNMMI-TS in efforts to increase reimbursement from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Ways to increase political and regulatory influence
- Ways SNMMI-TS can be a leader in strengthening the profession



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The strategic plan task force will be using the discussion summary from that meeting as the starting point for the new strategic plan.

The PET/MR task force is creating a new PET/MR section on the SNMMI website that will include job openings, important updates on PET/MR, and coding and reimbursement information. It is also developing a guide on PET/MR accreditation that will outline the process and best practices.

A PET/MR session is scheduled for the 2017 annual meeting, and the task force is collaborating with the Society for MR Radiographers and Technologists (a section of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine) to host a PET/MR meeting in 2018.

A call for volunteers was sent to all SNMMI-TS members in December, explaining that the technologist advisory board has been charged with developing important initiatives related to brain imaging. Seventeen volunteers have stepped forward to assist with these new initiatives.

SNMMI-TS has also partnered with Avid/Lilly to work on brain imaging projects. As a result, a brain working group of the SNMMI-TS technologist advisory board was formed and will develop brain imaging informational materials, including fact sheets, clinical vignettes, a video, and training materials for students and educators.

Continuing education is key to our ability to offer quality, state-of-the-art care. Among the new continuing education initiatives are a comprehensive diagnostic CT course for

nuclear medicine technologists, a PowerPoint educational program reviewing the administration of adjunctive medications, and a program on hospital competencies. The continuing education committee is also developing a course to support technologists planning to sit for the new radiation safety exam of the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board. In addition, the committee is addressing the continuing qualifications requirements of the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists by preparing small, entry-level continuing education courses.

SNMMI-TS advocacy efforts over the past year have been wide-ranging, and we are gearing up for the year ahead. We successfully prevailed on the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to drop a proposal that would have allowed nurses to perform and interpret medical imaging studies without adequate education and training. Other efforts protected the rights of qualified CNMTs to perform diagnostic CT studies. Meanwhile, licensure efforts have moved to state legislatures. Some, such as West Virginia, have considered proposals that would remove licensure requirements. Our opposition to the West Virginia proposal helped lead to its defeat.

Efforts to expand and clarify licensure requirements are under way in numerous states. Our attention is also needed

in states where nurses are seeking imaging privileges. The SNMMI Department of Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs has ramped up efforts to work with and support the leaders of the technologist advocacy group in every state and will be well prepared for next year's legislative sessions.

Our field is certainly experiencing exciting and challenging times! With nuclear medicine expanding the frontiers of health care through precision treatment, we technologists play a crucial role in providing tailored, precise care to patients. Ongoing effort is required to ensure we can perform our full scope of practice, provide the highest quality of care, and receive fair reimbursement. We have made progress, and I am confident that even greater strides will be made in the year ahead.

SNMMI-TS initiatives and issues require the work of many to carry our profession forward. I am so grateful to all who have contributed their time, expertise, and passion over the past year. The progress made has absolutely been a team effort! On a personal note, the opportunity to give back to the field of nuclear medicine technology has been a great joy. Thank you for the privilege of allowing me to represent you!