SNM Leadership Joint Report
Mid-Winter Meeting 2011
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Not unlike other organizations, this past year, the SNM experienced some difficult changes. While trying to keep with the changing economy, the SNM was not exempt from decreasing revenue sources and membership numbers. While the expectation for change within the field continued to grow, SNM started to change its focus on advancing molecular imaging to ensuring the future of nuclear medicine and molecular imaging physicians. With the adoption of a new strategic plan in June 2010, SNM was ready to face what the future had to hold. In an effort to conceptualize this new plan, changes within the core SNM structure had to be made.

During the Fall Finance Committee meeting and Board of Directors meeting, the committee and board members were presented a list of suggested changes, by the SNM Executive Management Team that would change the way SNM has conducted business for the past six years. Among these significant changes, included the following; a $25 increase in membership fees to international members, a reduction in staff, and a salary freeze. The changes mentioned, along with many others, assisted in creating a proposed surplus budget of over $200,000 for the first time in almost six years. The changes to the way business has been conducted, as well as a significant increase in communication amongst the SNM Leadership to the Board of Directors, House of Delegates and the Past Presidents, has issued in a new era within the society. One filled with promises of a bright and successful future for SNM and nuclear medicine as a whole.

Education Highlights
The education of physicians, scientists and technologists continues to remain a top priority of SNM. As the new strategic plan outlines in Goal A, it is our duty to keep our members abreast of rapidly changing technology to ensure they have the necessary tools to maintain certification requirements through the maintenance of certification program (MOC). Specifically, as in previous years, SNM organized successful sessions at the RSNA that included the day long vertical course entitled “Case-based Review of Nuclear Medicine: PET/CT Workshop.”

The SNM Mid-Winter and Annual Meetings provide a specific forum for nuclear medicine and molecular imaging professionals to engage in four-five days of specific education, networking and exhibition. The SNM/ACNM Mid-winter Meeting, taking place January 20-23, 2011 in Palm Springs, CA will also feature a CT workshop, Clinical Trial Network educational session organized by the CTN and a SNM Prostate Symposium. In addition, the 2011 Annual SNM Meeting will be June 4-6, 2011 in San Antonio, TX.

As in past years, the SNM will be organizing another ASCO/SNM Joint Educational Session that focuses on molecular imaging and cancer at the ASCO annual meeting taking place in Chicago. The planned focus this year is on the role of advanced imaging in cancer clinical trials - with a focus on molecular imaging; tentative date is June 3, 2011.

The Center for Molecular Imaging Innovation and Translation (CMIIT), formerly the Molecular Imaging Center of Excellence, also has three symposia scheduled for the spring. The In Vivo
Preclinical Imaging: An Introductory Workshop, to be held March 16-18, 2011 at the Center for Molecular and Gnomic Imaging at the University of California, Davis. This small workshop is designed for individuals who are new to in vivo small animal imaging and will consist of lectures, and, where possible, demonstrations of actual imaging procedures. The CMIIT will also be sponsoring the Breast Cancer Imaging: State of the Art 2011, scheduled for April 21-22, 2010 at the Natcher Auditorium on the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. The proposed two-day symposium will bring together individuals from multiple clinical and scientific disciplines associated with the diagnosis, staging treatment of patients with breast cancer. Specifically the conference will address the need for synergism between diagnostic radiology and molecular imaging as it is applied to the care of breast cancer patients. The last symposium, the Molecular Neuroimaging Symposium will be held on May 6-7, 2011 in Bethesda.

SNM web-based education has focused on maintenance of certification with the Lifelong Learning and Self-Assessment Program for Part II (LLSAP) and the Practice Performance Assessment Program for Part IV, in addition to modules of interactive CT and PET/CT cases and CT case review workshops. The full scope of SNM’s educational resources and guidelines related to hybrid imaging was highlighted in a Newsline article published in the October issue of JNM.

Under the leadership of George Segall, MD, SNM created a new radioimmunotherapy (RIT) program this year. RIT2 – RIT Resources, Information, and Tools as an education and awareness program to recognize the importance of radioimmunotherapy. RIT is a cutting-edge of cancer treatment option for patients that holds excellent promise. The goals include helping patients identify centers in their geographic area that provide RIT and allowing for recognition of medical centers and medical staff that has adopted RIT.

International Highlights
International attendance at the annual meeting and the international submissions and acceptance rate to the JNM are at a record high. Collaboration with international organizations is becoming essential to our success. This year many SNM members and volunteers participated in international educational meetings on behalf of SNM at their own expenses or with alternate sources of funding. Meeting highlights include; the 10th Congress of the World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology (WFNMB) held September 18-23, 2010 in Cape Town, South Africa, the European Association of Nuclear Medicine (EANM) held October 9-13, 2010 in Vienna, Austria and, later this year, the Sino-American Conference organized by the Chinese Society of Nuclear Medicine (CSNM) and SNM on February 24-27, 2011.

Our relationship with the EANM and CSNM has grown beyond expectations over the past year. What has become a tradition between the SNM and EANM, joint sessions at each others meetings, will of course continue into 2011 with a Prostate Imaging session organized by EANM and a PET Myocardial Perfusion Imaging session organized by SNM. While SNM’s collaboration with the CSNM has been limited in the past, this year, the leadership team and 15 residents will travel to China for the first Sino-American meeting. Funding for the residents and the leadership team has been provided by a combination of generous grants, leadership using their own funds to pay for travel and, while in China, expenses covered by the CSNM.

Finally, Dr. Segall coordinated the SNM collaboration to the IAEA 2nd International Conference on Clinical PET and molecular NM (PET-II) held on November 8-11, 2011 in Vienna, Austria. Three speakers have accepted to give lectures on behalf of SNM.
The opportunity to collaborate on these educational opportunities would not have come to fruition without the constant meetings with the various leadership groups. SNM is fortunate to have been able to participate in these activities and we are excited about what the future may hold with our international partners.

Drs. Delbeke and Segall have worked with the two co-chairs of the ACR/SNM Joint Training Task Force (Mickey Guiberteau, MD and Michael Graham, MD,PhD) to finalize the draft position article summarizing training options for nuclear medicine and radiology residency programs and making recommendations for future training options. The report of the task force will be reviewed during the Mid-Winter Meeting and published in both the JNM and JACR in the near future.

Advocacy at the Federal Level
SNM has increased its focus on advocacy programs because of the importance of advancing key SNM goals. We recently contracted with a new lobbying firm, Arent Fox, to help with government affairs and hired a new Director of Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs, Sue Bunning. We created a new Commission on Government Affairs because of the increasing emphasis on government relations and the importance of SNM’s involvement in legislative activities. This new commission consists of the Chair of the Government Relations Committee, the Coding and Reimbursement Committee, and other SNM members who will be liaisons with key organizations such as Department of Energy (DOE); Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC); National Quality Forum (NQF); Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS); and the AMA’s Physician Consortium for Performance Improvement (PCPI). The goal of the Government Relations Commission is to provide representatives/champions to the above organizations, and to ensure SNM is up to date and informed on any changes or new developments.

To jump start the planning and implementation process with the new team in place, we held an SNM Government Affairs Retreat during the RSNA meeting. Specific discussion topics included, healthcare reform, coding and reimbursement, domestic isotope availability, DOE funding, NRC regulations, FDA regulations about the current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) of PET radiopharmaceuticals, Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) and Guidelines.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) held a hearing in several cities, in November 2010, focusing on regulations for radiation exposure and release of patients treated with I-131. Several SNM representatives attended these meeting, including; Drs. Segall, Atcherand Zanzonico. SNM is diligently working to submit comments, due the end of January. Fred Fahey, PhD, is working to coordinate data about radiation doses received by different types of radiation workers at academic institution and industry. SNM leadership is also revising the SNM brochure for patients treated with I-131 and will seek NRC approval, once finalized.

The new Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations regarding current Good Manufacturing Practice (cGMP) of PET radiopharmaceuticals has soared to the top of the list for SNM’s priorities. AFDA Task Force, organized to work on this issue, has made great strides to date. The FDA Task Force, chaired by Sally Schwartz, PhD, and Henry Van Brocklin, PhD, is working to redefine SNM’s role and interaction with FDA regarding the submission of PET NDA’s A few months ago, the FDA become hesitant to collaborate with a single organization and turned rather non-responsive to the inquires from various organizations, including SNM. In response to this, SNM has recently formed a coalition to negotiate with the FDA an easier process for new drugs and devices applications.
The Clinical Trial Network’s mission is to facilitate multicenter trials with standardization of imaging. Multicenter trials are necessary for approval of new radiopharmaceuticals to be available in the clinical arena. Well designed and well standardized clinical trials are also necessary to demonstrate that including molecular imaging in patient care can improve patient management and outcome. Under the leadership of the three co-chairs, Drs. Graham, Hoffman and Conti, the SNM CTN has now qualified over 40 imaging centers over the world and has developed a curriculum to educate these centers about the practice of clinical trials. As a result of these efforts, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) Specialized Research Consortium (SRC) is considering using the services of the SNM CTN for qualifications and education of the imaging sites performing PET imaging in their upcoming multicenter trials.

Comparative Effectiveness Research (CER) and Guidelines
In 2010, the SNM practice guidelines were updated to include: (1) recommendations about best state-of-the-art protocols and technology, (2) more extensive radiation exposure information and radiopharmaceutical dose reduction where applicable to address concerns about radiation exposure, (3) qualifications of personnel to address concerns about quality performance, interpretation and radiation exposure, (4) more extensive references to support evidence. In 2010, three SNM guidelines, either new or significantly revised, were published in JNM and/or JNMT.

In 2009 and 2010, eight ACR-SNM practice guidelines were updated jointly and can be found on both the ACR and SNM websites. The ACR-SNM technical standard for procedures using radiopharmaceuticals includes qualifications of personnel is being revised this year.

A conjoint statement from the SNM/ACNM/ABNM on Credentialing and Delineation of Privileges for Therapeutic Procedures using Radiopharmaceuticals will be published in the February issue of JNM. Drs. Guiberteau fBrown from ACR have participated (as individuals) in these and assisted in making edits to the document in an attempt to facilitate future collaboration with ABR and ACR on training issues.

It is becoming obvious that the clinicians who order molecular imaging procedures must be prime movers in the development of Appropriate Use Criteria (AC). Therefore, SNM is collaborating with the American College of Radiology (ACR), the American College of Cardiology (ACC), the American Thyroid Association (ATA) and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) on various appropriateness use criteria and Practice Guidelines.

A full update relating to Cost Effectiveness Research (CER) and Guidelines was summarized in the “Leadership Update” Newline article in the January 2011 issue of JNM.

Liaison Organization Collaboration
Reduction of radiation exposure, when appropriate, is a high priority for SNM. The Pediatric Council of the SNM is actively participating in the Image Gently initiative to reduce radiation exposure in children and the SNM and the Society for Pediatric Radiology’s Board of Directors recently approved new “North American Guidelines for Radiopharmaceutical Doses for Children”, which is available on the SNM web site and is published in JNM.

During the RSNA meeting the Image Wisely program was formally launched. The group is now seeking the input and collaboration of other organizations in forming an alliance. SNM was asked to participate in this alliance and the SNM Committee on Councils with Dr. Palestro as Chair and Dr.
Fahey as Board Liaison, has been charged with designing a SNM program to reduce radiation exposure and will collaborate with Image Wisely.

New hardware and software for myocardial perfusion imaging has been validated and marketed for half-time acquisition and increased throughput. In an effort to reduce radiation exposure for myocardial perfusion imaging, the SNM appointed a task force with members of the Cardiovascular Council (Marcelo DiCarli, MD, Robert Schwartz, MD, Osama Mawlawi, MD, and Dominique Delbeke, MD, PhD) and American Society for Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC) (Ron Blankenstein, MD and Edward Miller, MD) to evaluate image quality using half-dose radiopharmaceuticals, when commercially available half-time acquisition software is used. The Task Force developed a phantom imaging protocol to demonstrate that image quality was equivalent using half-dose radiopharmaceutical/full time acquisition or full dose/half time using various new software and hardware commercially available. Preliminary discussions with Philips (Angela Da Silva and Horace Hines) revealed that industry has already started marketing these new technologies for lower counts acquisition whether using half time or half dose. The GE package insert with the Evolution software is marketing imaging low count as well.

In addition, the SNM Leadership had a brief meeting with Lalitha Shankar, MD from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) regarding PERCIST criteria. For evaluation of response to therapy, NCI is working with the RECIST committee and ACR to validate RECIST Criteria 2.0 that will include both size criteria on CT and FDG criteria on PET. SNM will continue to monitor the progress and provide the SNM BOD with updates, as they are available.

**Governance**

As a follow-up to the resolutions passed at the fall meeting, SNM has drafted a fundraising plan in collaboration with the Education and Research Foundation (ERF). This fundraising plan identifies programs that are in the strategic and implementation plans of the various commissions to meet the six main goals of the SNM strategic plan. The plan also integrates funding for continuation of CMIIT programs after the end of the MI campaign and SNMTS programs. At the Corporate Advisory Board meeting held at RSNA, some companies indicated their willingness to continue support of these programs beyond the campaign. Many of these programs have an educational component. Although the ERF has traditionally funded grants and awards, the funding of other educational programs are within the mission of the ERF, which is to support education and research in nuclear medicine and molecular imaging. The vision of the ERF is to be an effective fund-raising organization in support of the strategic plan of the SNM. As some donors are interested in named awards and programs, the SNM is also working with ERF on guidelines for naming opportunities for named awards and programs, both endowed and honorary. A joint SNM/ERF Task Force has been appointed and will be working together to develop these documents. The task force has identified a joint fundraising demonstration project, proposed by the SNMTS, to provide a roadshow program. The SNM Board of Directors also voted to review the alliance agreement document, which ERF has subsequently submitted updates to, regarding a long-term productive collaboration. We believe that discussions would be more productive after the completion of the joint fund-raising demonstration project and the development of the SNM fundraising plan with input from the ERF. These projects would help to re-establish a spirit of trust and cooperation between SNM and ERF. There was also progress on three other issues, namely, SNM administrative support services to ERF, appointment of the ERF Fundraising chair to the Grants and Awards Committee, and follow-up for donors on the use of ERF funds.
Over the past year, the SNM Leadership team has become acutely aware of the impact communication has on not only the membership of the SNM, but the governance level. In an effort to improve communication, quarterly conference calls are now organized with the House of Delegates (HOD) and the Committee on Past Presidents. These calls are in to the monthly conferences calls with the BOD, and bi-monthly calls with the Executive Committee.

Dr. Segall, will begin the committee appointment process in the next month and leadership discussions are on-going for next year nominations and appointments in an effort to best serve SNM.

The SNM leadership is committed to look at the future of Molecular Imaging and Nuclear Medicine as a specialty. After much discussion, a new plan will be presented to the Board in January, calling for the creation of a Nuclear Medicine 2020 Task Force. The Task Force will bring together a broad cross section of health care professionals to discuss the future of the profession and the SNM, and make recommendations that will serve as guiding principles to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Further discussions and input from various stakeholders are planned, including the HOD at the MWM.

Summary
As we come to the end of the Bench to Bedside Campaign, the SNM is planning for a celebration during the Annual Meeting to highlight the many accomplishments over the past five years. While this may be the end of an era at SNM, it is the beginning of a new future. We made significant progress in 2010 in focusing our society’s energy and funding on key goals, advancing initiatives that improve patient care and outcomes, addressing the critical issue of Mo-99 shortage and new regulations and developing the financial roadmap to support and sustain our programs in the future. We are excited about our progress and look forward to advancing these initiatives in 2011.

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