

SNMMI Statement on FDA Radiation Reduction Program

Since founded in 1954, the Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging (SNMMI), an international scientific and professional organization to promote the science, technology and practical application of nuclear medicine, has demanded quality in the form of accreditation and education. SNMMI is committed to ensuring that patients receive safe advanced medical imaging procedures and therapies and applauds the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for recognizing the need for and supporting such efforts to ensure patients receive appropriate imaging care.

Nuclear medicine uses safe, painless, and cost-effective techniques to image the body and treat disease. The imaging is unique and serves as a way to gather medical information that would otherwise be unavailable, require surgery, or necessitate more expensive diagnostic techniques. Nuclear medicine imaging procedures often identify abnormalities very early in the progress of disease – long before medical problems are apparent with other diagnostic tests.

Each year thousands of patients undergo advanced medical imaging procedures and therapies. While rare, adverse events such as those outlined in recent media reports, underscore the need for persistent steps to help make certain patients receive the safest, most appropriate care. SNMMI continues its work with the American Board of Nuclear Medicine (ABNM), the Nuclear Medicine Technology Certification Board (NMTCB), the American Registry of Radiologic Technologists (ARRT) and others, to promulgate national standards for certification and licensure of all nuclear medicine professionals, including physicians and technologists. Additionally, SNMMI supports the certification and accreditation of nuclear medicine laboratories. Having worked closely with Intersocietal Commission for the Accreditation on Nuclear Medicine Laboratories (ICANL) since its inception, SNMMI is pleased that ICANL was recognized by the Secretary of Health and Human Services to accredit labs for Medicare and Medicaid reimbursement.

SNMMI provides training and education for physicians and technologists at all stages of their career to ensure high levels of quality across the field. By developing and revising appropriateness criteria through a multi-societal, multi-disciplined collaborative effort, SNMMI is able to supply providers with information to help them prescribe the most suitable imaging procedure for a particular clinical indication. SNMMI is promoting quality and patient safety through the Practice Performance assessment requirement of Maintenance of Certification, which allows physicians to compare their own practice with procedure guidelines and appropriateness criteria of professional organizations. Through the educational efforts of SNMMI, physicians will be able to compare their practice regarding patient radiation dose to national standards, and document practice improvement.

The concerns raised by the FDA also emphasize the urgency for enacting H.R. 3652, “The Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act of 2009.” (CARE Act). In supporting this bill, SNMMI agrees that requiring those who perform medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures to meet minimum federal education and credentialing standards in order to participate in federal health programs administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Medicare and Medicaid programs is necessary. Thus, medical imaging procedures, as well as radiation therapy treatments for patients covered under these programs, would

need to be performed by personnel meeting these federal standards in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

SNMMI believes the provisions in the CARE bill will ensure quality in medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures; reduce healthcare costs by lowering the number of repeated procedures due to poor technique or improper positioning, and; improve the safety of patients undergoing medical imaging and radiation therapy procedures.

In addition to its support of the CARE Bill, SNMMI is actively working to educate its members on dose radiation and radiation safety through articles in the Journal of Nuclear Medicine, CT activities such as the case-review workshops, and online education –all include a section on radiation safety, and an entire series on radiation safety will be offered for technologists at the 2010 SNMMI Annual Meeting.

The Society of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging looks forward to working with the FDA, other government agencies, and stakeholders toward improving quality and standards to ensure patients receive the safest and most appropriate care.