



Advancing Molecular Imaging and Therapy

February 24, 2010

The Honorable Frank Pallone
United States House of Representatives
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Pallone:

The Society of Nuclear Medicine¹ (SNM), an international scientific and medical organization with more than 17,000 physician, technologist, and scientist members who specialize in the research and practice of nuclear medicine, is particularly interested in the upcoming House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health hearing, "Medical Radiation: An Overview of the Issues," to be held on Friday February 26th and would like to share the attached statement with you for your reference.

SNM commends the Subcommittee for holding a hearing on this issue. 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. Since its founding in 1954, SNM has demanded quality in the form of accreditation and education. SNM supports H.R. 3652, "The Consistency, Accuracy, Responsibility, and Excellence in Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy Act of 2009"(CARE Act) as means to require 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. SNM continues to work with other medical societies to promulgate national standards for certification and licensure of all nuclear medicine professionals and supports the accreditation of nuclear medicine laboratories. SNM 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 SNM, physicians will be able to compare their practice regarding patient radiation dose to national standards, and document practice improvement.

Nuclear medicine procedures provide a way to gather medical information that would otherwise be unavailable. Without these procedures, patients would require surgery or other unnecessary expensive therapies. However, SNM is committed to provides education to ensure that nuclear medicine procedures are performed safely and with minimal radiation exposure to patients. Finally, it is important to understand that when these studies are done responsibly and appropriately, the benefit to the patient from the information obtained far outweighs the small risks associated with the radiation exposure. SNM welcomes the opportunity to serve as a resource to your office. Should you have any questions, please contact our Washington Representative, Jodie Curtis, at Jodie.curtis@dbr.com, or 202-230-5147.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Graham, PhD, MD
President, Society of Nuclear Medicine

¹ SNM is an international scientific and medical organization dedicated to raising public awareness about what molecular imaging is and how it can help provide patients with the best health care possible. SNM members specialize in molecular imaging, a vital element of today's medical practice that adds an additional dimension to diagnosis, changing the way common and devastating diseases are understood and treated. SNM's more than 17,000 members set the standard for molecular imaging and nuclear medicine practice by creating guidelines, sharing information through journals and meetings and leading advocacy on key issues that affect molecular imaging and therapy research and practice. For more information, visit www.snm.org.