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March 25, 2020

Nuclear Medicine Program Directors

Dear Director:

The COVID-19 public health emergency has impacted many people. In a letter dated March 13, 2020, we informed program directors that residents would be permitted to take an additional 2 weeks of leave (10 working days) in 2020 for all COVID-19 related reasons, including home quarantine.

We also recognize that cancellation/deferral of non-urgent medical procedures will reduce the number of diagnostic nuclear medicine studies performed in adults and children, and will also likely reduce the number of oral radioiodine therapies for hyperthyroidism if thyroid scans are deferred, and/or patients are maintained on anti-thyroid medication. The impact of COVID-19 on radioiodine treatment for thyroid cancer, and parenteral therapies for other cancers is likely to be less, but may still be significant.

Since it may be impossible for residents who complete training this year to obtain experience with the required number of studies, the ABNM has made a one-time modification of the case experience requirements in 2020 for all COVID-19 related reasons, as follows:

- Cardiovascular stress test supervision (exercise or pharmacologic) - 75 studies (normally 100 studies)
- Pediatric nuclear medicine - 75 studies (normally 100 studies)
- Radiotherapy with I-131 - 20 cases (at least 10 benign plus 10 malignant, including 3 ≤ 33 mCi and 3 > 33 mCi) (normally 30 cases)  
Parenteral therapies requiring a written directive – 3 cases (normally 5 cases)

Candidates for the ABNM certification examination are also required to be certified in advanced cardiac life support (ACLS). The American Heart Association is allowing a 60-day extension of ACLS instructor cards beyond the renewal date, and recommends that employers and regulatory bodies extend provider cards 60 days beyond renewal date. The ABNM is adopting this recommendation:


- ACLS certification – 60-day extension beyond renewal date of current provider cards.

If trainees do not meet these modified requirements, program directors will be required to provide the ABNM with an educational plan and request for exemption that will be considered on a case by case basis.

The ABNM will continue to work with program directors to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on residents and training program during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

  
Jonathan E. McConathy, MD, PhD  
Chair

  
George M. Segall, MD  
Executive Director

JEM/GMS/mrf