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The American Board of Nuclear Medicine

2014 Issue 1

A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties

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Establishing a Dual Training Pathway in Nuclear Medicine and Diagnostic Radiology—The Stanford Experience

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A dual training pathway in Nuclear Medicine (NM) and Diagnostic Radiology (DR) was created at Stanford in 2014 to facilitate the recruitment of medical students interested in Molecular Imaging, and to improve resident training in hybrid imaging. Our experience creating this pathway may help other Program Directors interested in establishing similar pathways at their institutions.

The first step was enlisting the support of the DR Program Director for the proposed pathway. Residents would enter the proposed pathway after completing one clinical year of training. During the first year of the proposed pathway (PGY2), residents would train in NM for 12 months under the direction of the NM program director. Residents would then train for four years in DR under the direction of the DR program director. Residents would receive 1 month of NM training during each year of the first three years, and 12 months of NM training during the fourth year of DR. Upon completion of both programs, residents would have 48 months of training in DR (including 15 months of NM), and a total of 27 months of training in NM.

The second step was getting approval for the proposed pathway by the Designated Institutional Official (DIO) for Graduate Medical Education, and the Graduate Medical Education (GME) Committee. Approval at Stanford required completing an application, and making a presentation to the GME committee explaining the academic need for the pathway.

The third step was to write to the American Board of Nuclear Medicine, and the American Board of Radiology, describing the pathway, and getting confirmation that graduates would be eligible to take the Certification Examinations of both boards.

Once all the approvals were obtained, the DIO at Stanford applied to the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) for an Accreditation Data System (ADS) number. The application required a description of the curricula, and a letter of support from the GME committee.

After receiving an ADS number, the DIO registered the pathway with Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS®) of the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC), and the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

We hope the pathway will be successful, and that other institutions will adopt similar pathways at their institutions to provide physicians with the skills necessary to advance the field of Molecular Imaging.