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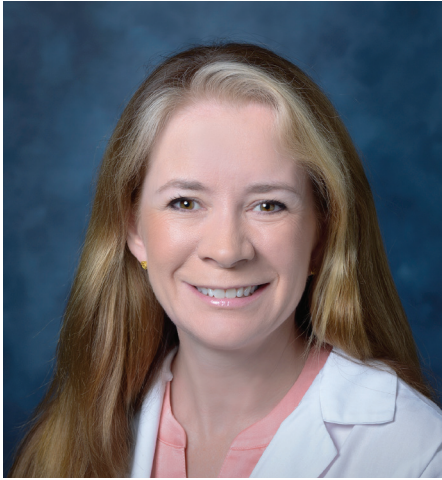
The American Board of Nuclear Medicine

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A Member Board of the American Board of Medical Specialties

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Chair's Message



Louise E. Thomson, MB.ChB.
Chair, ABNM

2015 has been an important year for ABNM and for the nuclear medicine community, as we reflected upon a proposal for nuclear medicine to become a discipline of radiology, which would have led to the dissolution of the board. Broad stakeholder feedback was obtained through three major surveys, and the majority opinion is in favor of the continuation of ABNM as an independent ABMS member board. We thank you for your participation in this process. Although it may feel as if this conversation has rocked our foundations, these events serve to draw the nuclear medicine community into focus regarding important issues facing diplomats and the specialty.

At a time when scientific advances in molecular medicine herald a new era for imaging and theranostics, nuclear medicine specialists should be well positioned to provide physician expertise for our growing field. In order to fill these shoes we are challenged to embrace hybrid imaging – SPECT, PET, MR and whilst recent training programs dedicate attention to CT experience there are many who are adapting in mid or late career to significant changes in clinical practice. This is the nature of medicine, and exemplifies why we must all be lifelong learners.

Resting within a comfort zone of familiarity threatens our ability to remain fully engaged in nuclear medicine of today.

The Board has received a clear message from the nuclear medicine community that we are valued as an institution and that our continued existence is a necessity for nuclear medicine to be an independent specialty. So we turn to the future with renewed energy. But as we look forward, it will not be business as usual. The Board recognizes the need to evolve, as practice evolves, to support our diplomates in the changing landscape of the specialty.

These are challenging times for many areas of specialist medicine, with shifting policies for resource utilization, economics of healthcare and heightened competition within the job market. Physicians are increasingly busy with volume and complexity of clinical work, and are required to meet local institutional, state medical board, radiation licensing authority and Board credentialing requirements. Maintenance of specialty certification is a complex mix of SAM, CME, performance improvement projects and high stakes examination – a common theme for ABMS member boards. There is recognition, however, that the MOC process should be less burdensome and so the ABNM is committed to significant changes in how we approach MOC. The challenge for the Board is to develop a new MOC process that is more clinically relevant, easily accessible and acceptable to our diplomates. Please read more in the article from Dr Daniel Pryma in this addition of the newsletter.

The future is bright for nuclear medicine, and continued growth in molecular medicine is anticipated. However trainees and programs have decreased in number and there is a need for us as a community to discuss how we go about attracting medical students to our field. This is a critical issue for our specialty. The ABNM looks forward to contributing to an outreach plan in collaboration with NM stakeholder organizations. Please read more in the article by Dr George Segall, Executive Director.

Ongoing discussions within the NM community are planned over the next few months and will be coordinated by the SNMMI. The Board encourages ABNM diplomates to stay involved in these conversations about the important issues that influence the future vitality of our specialty and we thank you for your support.