



Chair's Message



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Chair, ABNM

It is my pleasure to write this message as the out-going chair. During the course of discussions within our community over the last year questions have been asked regarding the composition of the ABNM board of directors. Who are the members of the Board and why would the Board have considered changes in structure that could influence the nuclear medicine community as a whole?

The stated primary purpose of the ABNM board is the advancement of the health of the public through the establishment and maintenance of standards of training and education, and the qualification of physicians rendering nuclear medicine services in the United States. The board has 12 directors - 4 of whom serve in positions as chair, vice-chair, secretary-treasurer and past chair. On a yearly basis, as Board members complete terms of service, replacement members are nominated by the nuclear medicine community and are selected to ensure balanced representation of subspecialty interests and the diversity of practice in our community. Directors give their time freely for a term of up to 6 years, with the work of the Board being organized and supported by the Executive Director and Assistant Executive director (non-voting officers). All directors are required to take the recertification examination prior to serving. Current members come from 9 states and one is from Canada. There is representation from private and academic centers, with a mix of ABNM only and dual certified directors, seven women and five men. Board members have one thing in common – we are all motivated by the desire to see nuclear medicine thrive, and our belief in high quality practice standards.

The past year saw very important conversations within the nuclear medicine community about training, certification, maintenance of certification and the future of the ABNM. The majority participating in this discussion supported the need for the ABNM to remain an independent board. However, there was also a majority in favor of dual training for nuclear medicine physicians in radiology. Moving forward, the ABNM will be working with nuclear medicine stakeholders and contributing to the new SNMMI led taskforce and I hope that our diplomates will be engaged in these ongoing very important discussions. Our community needs to find ways to encourage medical school graduates and radiology residents to consider training in nuclear medicine and we are challenged to offer practical support to diplomates who may face great difficulties related to local credentialing, workplace competition and healthcare economics.

The ABNM is a small member board of the American Board of Medical Specialties. The long-term success of ABNM as an independent specialty board is in the hands of our diplomates. Numbers of candidates being certified each year is stable, however the count of nuclear medicine trainees and training pathways is decreasing and we see a rapid rise in the proportion participating in pathways for dual certification. In an ideal world, all ABNM certified physicians remain connected with their certifying Board, and participate in recommended programs for maintenance of certification and quality of practice. In the real world, there is a 19% participation rate by active lifetime certificate holders, 62% participation rate by time limited certificate holders and those who are dual boarded may choose not to maintain two certificates. This is the financial foundation upon which we are expected to support all diplomates.

As the ABNM looks to the future, priority is being given to updating the MOC process. Redesign is aimed at increasing accessibility, relevance, and very importantly, increasing active participation. These changes are in line with many other ABMS member boards, will meet ABMS requirements, and come in response to criticisms of the existing recertification process. The Board hopes that current and future diplomates will embrace developments in MOC and that you will participate, and support your Board as we continue to serve you.

It is the time of year for transitions as the Board farewells three directors and welcomes new members. We say farewell to Dr Janis O'Malley, Dr Eric Rohen and Dr Jerry Wallis and thank them very much for their years of dedicated service.

We welcome three new directors – Dr Esmā Akin from Washington, DC; Dr Andrei Iagaru from Stanford, CA; and Dr Jonathan McConathy from Birmingham, AL. Congratulations go to Dr Daniel Pryma, the new Secretary-Treasurer, Dr Erin Grady who becomes Vice-Chair and Dr Munir Ghesani who becomes Chair.

It has been an honor to serve as Chair. My thanks go to recent past and current Board members for their support; and for their commitment to our specialty and to the ABNM.