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## From the Desk of the Chair

### *Challenges in the Practice of (Nuclear) Medicine*

**Daniel A Pryma, M.D., Chair, ABNM**

Throughout our careers we enjoy many rewarding moments but also face challenges and obstacles. Many of the difficulties that we feel most acutely and personally are actually shared broadly throughout medicine. Whether related to turf battles, contracting, maintenance of certification or insurance reimbursement, the challenges are broadly shared. A common thread in discussions of change in medicine today relate to financial pressures. Simply put, we all need to work harder today to maintain yesterday's compensation. These challenges are far from unique to nuclear medicine and are faced by all specialties and health systems in the United States. At the same time that there are downward pressures on per study reimbursement, the cost of delivering care continues to increase, leaving less margin.

Meanwhile, medicine continues to evolve with increasing rapidity. We are constantly provided with new tools to improve care for our patients. While this is one of the most rewarding aspects of a career in (nuclear) medicine, learning to apply these new tools takes time and effort. At a time when there is great strain on the resources we have for learning (i.e., available time and financial resources), we have a great deal to learn. Each of us must optimize our efforts within our constraints and the ABNM is committed to helping our diplomates with this. Conversely, the ABNM relies on the support of its diplomates in order to carry out its mission.

Each of the 12 directors of the ABNM is a practicing nuclear medicine physician; our work with the board is on a volunteer basis. We come from a variety of backgrounds and have varied practice patterns and locations. We are well aware of the challenges that ABNM diplomates face because we face them as well. We always consider these challenges when making board decisions. For example, we do all that we can to minimize the financial impact of ABNM certification for our diplomates. We are a small board with far fewer diplomates than most over whom to amortize our costs. Therefore, we take our financial responsibilities very seriously.

While fiscal discretion is critical, stagnation is not a viable option. In the face of a changing medical landscape, we do need to evolve and adjust. New programs and projects are costly. We cannot afford to get things wrong, neither can we afford to do nothing. We have great ideas, both from within the board as well as from your suggestions. While we cannot afford to implement them all, we do try to choose the most promising and come up with ways to test and refine them within strict cost constraints. We also try to leverage our membership in the American Board of Medical Specialties to share costs with the other member boards, as we have done with the CertLink pilot.

Through careers in nuclear medicine we have amazing opportunities to improve the lives of our patients. The ABNM exists to help enable its diplomates to continue to grow and improve the field and standing of nuclear medicine through positive impacts on patient care. It is our board. We all rely on the ABNM for certification and the ABNM relies on its diplomates for the financial support, input and energy to continue in its mission. We hope to optimize communication and engagement between the ABNM and the broad diplomate community to continue to help this field that we love to grow and evolve.