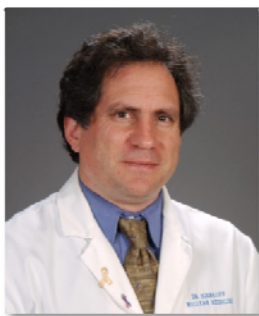


News from the Summer, 2011 ABNM Meeting

David A. Mankoff, M.D., Ph.D., Chairman



It was a pleasure to hold my first meeting as ABNM Chair. At the summer meeting, we welcomed our two new Board members, **Helen Nadel** and **Louise Thomson**, to their first official ABNM meeting. We also welcome back an old friend, **Dominique Delbeke**, fresh off her year as SNM President.

At the summer meeting, we handled many of the items that we routinely review and discuss during the summer meeting, including the results of the In-Training Exam (ITE), new questions written by Board members, and items related to credentialing, communications, finance, residency programs, communications, and MOC. One of the main functions of the Board is to develop and refine the Certification (CE) and Maintenance of Certification (MOC) examinations, and we typically focus a substantial portion of the summer meeting on developing and refining examination questions. We reviewed new standards for quality and formatting images used for questions, and worked to generate a template for image transfer and storage. **Lalitha Ramanna**, the current Exam Committee Chair, reviewed the features of questions that had previously performed poorly on examinations, and discussed how to avoid pitfalls in writing future questions. We also reviewed considerable progress that had been made by the Executive Director, **Henry Royal**, and ABNM staff member, **Emily Fields**, in cataloging the detailed content of the existing pool of examination questions. This represents a significant advance in the examination database that will help focus new question writing on underrepresented content areas. In addition, these tools will make it much easier to review and catalog questions during conference calls between meetings, leaving more time for the Board to discuss other important issues at its semi-annual meetings.

This year, in addition to the routine topics, the Board devoted considerable time to larger, “existential” questions about the evolving state of nuclear medicine, and the Board’s role as the certifying organization for nuclear medicine. Should an independent board for nuclear medicine continue to exist? How should future nuclear medicine physicians be trained? How does the board govern itself? What should be the relationship of the ABNM to the ABR? Vigorous discussions about these questions gave rise to some important answers and actions.

All Board members agreed strongly that an independent ABNM was vital and key to the ongoing success of nuclear medicine as a practice specialty. The good financial health of the Board, a strong committed set of members, and the ongoing commitment of the ABNM diplomates to support the Board are important indicators that show that the Board is in a position of strength to continue as the nuclear medicine certifying organization for many years to come. There was uniform consensus in this opinion, and firm resolve by all members to uphold the ABNM’s 40-year tradition of excellence as nuclear medicine’s certifying organization.

During this discussion of how the Board should lead itself, it was decided that the Board should create an Associate Executive Director position to work with the Executive Director to divide the increasing workload of the Executive Director, and assure a smooth transition when the Executive Director’s term is complete. The ABNM is currently advertising for this position and will interview candidates later in the fall.



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Finally, there was a vigorous discussion of the future of nuclear medicine practice and nuclear medicine training, with a variety of different opinions expressed. The expanding role and range of clinical molecular imaging tests, the continued emergence of hybrid imaging devices, and ongoing changes to the landscape of medicine and medical reimbursement in general were all considered factors leading to a period of considerable change in nuclear medicine. One area of consensus was the desire to support combined nuclear medicine and diagnostic radiology training and to help programs and residents take advantage of the possibility of combined training afforded by the new diagnostic radiology training format. Related to this, there was a desire by Board members to reach out to the ABR to resume discussions, focused on joint support for combined diagnostic radiology/nuclear medicine training, and other areas of mutual interest, such as MOC for physicians with certificates in both diagnostic radiology and nuclear medicine.

All-in-all it was a very busy 3 days at the summer meeting, with much discussion and considerable progress. All members left looking forward to the next Board meeting in the winter of 2012.

In the coming year, The Board plans to take further steps to improve the quality of our certifying and MOCs processes, and to make progress in other areas along the lines identified at the summer meeting. I am honored and privileged to be the ABNM Chair for this year, and I hope to be able to serve diplomates well by continuing to support the excellence of the ABNM.



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