

Message from the Chair

Ruth Lim, MD – Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Dear ABNM Diplomates:

As we mark the one-year anniversary of our “new normal” during the COVID-19 pandemic, I hope that you and your loved ones are staying safe and healthy. Let’s all take a moment to acknowledge and grant extra compassion for having pushed through our fatigue to meet the challenges of each new day. Without doubt, you are all doing your best to fulfil many roles and responsibilities, and for this you should be unreservedly commended.

The work of the Board continues uninterrupted, although in a very different manner than in pre-pandemic times. The 103rd and 104th Board Meetings were conducted remotely, enabling us to keep up with important tasks such as administering examinations, delivering CertLink content, credentialing, and addressing disruptions to these areas caused by the pandemic. For diplomates and trainees who have been unduly affected by COVID-19, we encourage you to contact the ABNM office as needed and refer to our COVID Policy Modification at <https://www.abnm.org/index.php/covid-19/>.

Of equal importance, we are also in the midst of a historic shift in our social fabric as we confront past and current truths about race in the United States and around the world. The “[ABNM Statement on Racism as a Public Health Crisis](#)” addresses racism and violence against Blacks and other people of color. The public places its trust in us as physicians, and this statement affirms the Board’s commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion. While this is a starting point, there remains a lifetime of sustained effort ahead.

I am pleased to share that the Board will be continuing its open nomination process for selection of new members. The ABNM aims for membership that reflects our diverse community of diplomates and Nuclear Medicine trainees. Despite our best efforts, we acknowledge that some minority groups, including Blacks, continue to be underrepresented and we certainly welcome applications and inquiries from all diplomates who may be interested. A formal call for applications will be sent in April, and we encourage both new and previous applicants to consider applying.

In other good news, the Board has made substantial progress on some important long-term projects. We are nearing our transition to a new database system for examination questions, after extensive vetting of several vendors. The new question banking platform is specific to organizations who design and deliver examinations. After on-boarding and training are completed, we anticipate a gradual improvement in the quality, efficiency, and reliability of exam-related operations. The new

system will also enable the In-Training Examination (ITE) to be delivered electronically to trainees world-wide beginning in 2022. The Board is also in the process of re-vamping our Exam Blueprints so that they will better reflect current training and practice patterns. These changes will be based on survey data from current practitioners of nuclear medicine in private, community, and academic practice settings. The implementation date for the new Exam Blueprints has not yet been determined but expect to see more emphasis on the rapidly-expanding practice of radionuclide therapy, and a larger proportion of questions devoted to oncology and cardiac imaging.

The ABNM has recently updated its [Radionuclide Therapy Requirements for initial certification](#) to reflect the expanding use of Radionuclide Therapy/Theranostics in clinical practice. As I am sure many of you are experiencing, all aspects of Nuclear Medicine (Molecular Imaging, Radionuclide Therapy/Theranostics, Hybrid Imaging, etc.) are growing at an unprecedented rate. There have been [some expressed concerns](#) about whether the supply of Nuclear Medicine physicians will keep pace with this growth. The ABNM is confident in our community’s ability to create an ample supply of high-quality training opportunities and provide patients with safe, expert care. However, it is incumbent upon all of us in the near- and long-term future to attract the best and brightest trainees to our specialty. This effort begins on a micro-scale: in your daily interactions with medical students, residents, and mentees; during lectures; while networking at conferences. With coordinated intention, we can ensure that patients continue to have access to innovative diagnostic and therapeutic nuclear medicine techniques developed by our community.

In closing, I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to Past Chair, Dr. Jonathan McConathy, for his year of exemplary leadership that enabled us to thrive despite the challenging circumstances. No less deserving of thanks is the ABNM Office Staff (Maria Watts, Patrick Murphy, Monica Frye), who have pivoted repeatedly on a moment’s notice with the highest level of professionalism and patience. It is my honor to work with this dedicated Board, including our Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, and panel of volunteer Officers and Directors. We will continue our socially-distanced work toward growth and recovery, as we look forward to a time when we may safely connect in person again.



Ruth Lim, M.D.
Chair