Message from the Chair

Jonathan E. McConathy, MD, PhD - Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine

Dear ABNM Diplomates:

I hope that you and your families are healthy and that you are weathering the disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many of you, the ABNM is conducting business remotely, and our Winter 2021 meeting will occur through video conference rather than our traditional in-person gathering. We will continue to work with individual programs and trainees to deal with circumstances affecting training and certification due to the pandemic. I would like to use this letter to update you on recent and ongoing activities of the Board.

We are currently reviewing the results from the CertLink® longitudinal examination pilot program for Maintenance of Certification (MOC). This review includes the statistical aspects of all responses as well as identifying questions that did not perform well. Feedback from the community has been very helpful in refining the content of CertLink® as well as improving individual questions. We expect to complete this analysis, provide results to individual diplomates, and issue guidance to diplomates regarding the ABNM’s long-term approach to MOC in early 2021.

The Board is considering changes to the therapy requirements for ABNM certification in recognition of the exciting growth and evolution of this aspect of nuclear medicine. These therapy requirements were last changed in 2014. We are in the process of contacting Nuclear Medicine Program Directors to get their input on the proposed new requirements to ensure that they are attainable for trainees while continuing to maintain high standards for certification. Although not finalized, we plan to provide greater flexibility in the number of radiiodine therapies required and increase the number of parenteral therapies required. We believe these changes will make the training requirements reflect the current practice of nuclear medicine and the expected increase in FDA-approved targeted radionuclide therapies in the future.

The Board is continuing to have an open nomination process for selection of new members. We concluded accepting nominations at the end of August 2020 for a single opening on the Board in 2021. The new Board member will be announced by October 1st of this year. We believe this process increases the transparency of selection of new Board members and helps the Board better reflect the diversity of our Diplomates. Because we receive many nominations from well-qualified individuals, we have many excellent candidates who are not selected. For this reason, we encourage past nominees who are not selected this year to participate in future calls for new ABNM members.

Although this year has not gone as expected, it has been an honor and privilege to serve as the Chair of the ABNM. Working with the Board members, the Executive Directors and the ABNM staff has been a pleasure. There are many exciting developments in Nuclear Medicine that bode well for the health of the field including the recent approval of [F]FDOPA for movement disorders and [F]fluoroestradiol (FES) for imaging estrogen receptors in breast cancer, late phase trials of prostate specific membrane antigen (PSMA) ligands for imaging and therapy of prostate cancer, and increasing numbers of trainees taking the ABNM Certifying Examination with approximately 68 candidates this fall, increased by about 20% compared to a few years ago. The ABNM remains committed to supporting our trainees and diplomates to provide high quality nuclear medicine studies and therapies to our patients.

Sincerely,

Jonathan E. McConathy, MD, PhD