

SNMMI Holds Patient Advocacy Hill Day

On Monday, September 28, 2015, SNMMI, patient advocates, and members of the Patient Advocacy Advisory Board, met with 42 Congressional offices for SNMMI's 2015 Patient Hill Day. As millions of Americans are diagnosed and/or treated using nuclear medicine, the purpose of these meetings was to discuss patient access issues as it relates to appropriate reimbursement and nuclear medicine. Specifically, we discussed how the nuclear medicine ambulatory payment classifications (APC) in the 2016 Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment System's proposed rule could delay patient care and prevent the development of new radiopharmaceutical drugs.

CMS is packaging too wide a range of diagnostic radiopharmaceutical drugs into a single payment known as an APC. In some instances, the cost of the drugs used in these procedures can significantly exceed the payment amount of the entire APC. This can result in delays in patient care because patients may have to travel to other medical facilities, far from their home, in order to receive a necessary procedure. Alternatively, physicians may also choose to prescribe other procedures that may be more costly, less effective, and/or inappropriate. Moreover, due to inadequate reimbursement, companies will stop developing new life-saving diagnostic radiopharmaceutical drugs.

Recognizing these negative impacts on patient access, SNMMI and patient advocates asked members of Congress to support a sign on letter that urges CMS to delay implementing their 2016 rule, and to collaborate with nuclear medicine stakeholders to develop a viable APC structure that benefits the patients relying on nuclear medicine.

The following patient advocacy groups helped make SNMMI's 2015 Patient Hill Day a great success: the Alzheimer's Association, Lymphoma Research Foundation, Men's Health Network, Colon Cancer Alliance, NorCal CarciNET Community, and the Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered (FORCE) group.



Left: Andrew Dilldine, NorCal CarciNET Community Patient Advocate. **Right:** Neil Petry, MS, RPh, BCNP from Duke University Medical Center

We would like to thank all participants for attending this event.