

# Message from the Chair

**Ryan D. Niederkohr, MD** – *Chair, American Board of Nuclear Medicine*

Dear ABNM Diplomates:

For most diplomates, the most significant interaction with the ABNM comes in the form of knowledge assessment, such as taking the initial certification or maintenance of certification exam, or participating in CertLink®, ABNM's longitudinal assessment tool. All of these products comprise questions which represent the collective work of ABNM board members, both prior and current. The critical importance of having high quality questions is obvious. At the same time, creating excellent exam questions is no easy task.

At a fundamental level, examinations or CertLink questions are intended to focus on a key point of knowledge that is felt to be relevant to the contemporary practice of nuclear medicine. The question gives the diplomate an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of that key topic; or, alternatively, an opportunity to identify a topic which might not be fully mastered. In this sense, all questions represent an opportunity for ongoing learning. (Parenthetically: this is one of the unique advantages of using CertLink. Upon completion of each question, the key point is presented, along with one or more references which can be accessed to learn more about that topic. The hope is that this can facilitate the process of lifelong learning for all of us in busy clinical practices.)

But as we all know, clinical practice - and, for that matter, life in general - does not always have a single correct answer! This, among many other factors, increases the challenge and complexity of question creation. To this end: ABNM needs and appreciates your feedback. Every question, whether it

be on a traditional exam or CertLink, offers the option to submit feedback. Diplomates are encouraged to use this route to send comments about individual questions. For example, if you suspect that a question potentially has two equally correct answers, please be sure to submit this feedback. Or, if you think a question was particularly useful / relevant to clinical practice, that feedback is helpful as well.

What happens to these comments after they are submitted? The ABNM reviews 100% of these comments! Each item of feedback is reviewed by at least one (and usually more) Board member(s). Comments with substantiated concerns (*e.g.*, “two correct answers” being a prototypical example) will result in corrective action for that question, which might include discarding it entirely or rewriting it to improve its psychometric quality. Feedback regarding topic / question relevance to clinical practice are considered as well.

While logistics preclude the Board from replying to individual diplomates who submit comments, we want you to know that your comments are indeed received, reviewed, thoughtfully considered, and greatly valued. We want to sincerely thank you for your feedback: it is of vital importance and helps the ABNM to improve the quality of its products.



Ryan D. Niederkohr, MD  
Chair