

2024-2025 SNMMI-TS Nuclear MAP Student Contest

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My Nuclear Medicine Student Experience

Introduction

My journey into the nuclear medicine profession started when I was a clerical employee in a diagnostic imaging department in Grass Valley. I began as a simple registrar and worked my way up into scheduling and protocoling orders as I learned more about diagnostic imaging as a whole. I was lucky enough to have an encounter with one of the nuclear medicine technologists at the hospital that I worked at in which he showed me the difference of nuclear medicine in comparison to the other imaging modalities. From there I was able to meet more and more nuclear medicine ambassadors who would shape my drive and desire to pursue nuclear medicine as a career.

Ambassadors

Originally I had my focus on a career in xray technology, but because of the lesson and encouragement from my technologist coworker, I switched gears towards nuclear medicine. Shortly after making the decision to switch to nuclear medicine as my focus, I went back to school to earn my associate's degree to be eligible for the few nuclear medicine programs in my area. Unfortunately, I had to relocate and leave my current position to dedicate more of my time to school while minimizing my expenses. In my next job as a patient service representative in Sacramento, I met more nuclear medicine ambassadors in the form of technologists and my manager. I was encouraged to ask them as many questions that I could come up with as well as shadowing them when time would allow. One of the technologists that I became close with began giving me advice on the different programs that were available to me to apply to as well as coaching me on information that I should familiarize myself with to stand out as a candidate. My manager also helped me along my path to becoming eligible to apply to programs as he

previously was a technologist as well. He allowed me to shadow both PET imaging as well as general nuclear medicine to gain insight as to what the job would entail as well as the good that nuclear medicine gave to medical imaging. The technologists showed me how their compassion would touch our most vulnerable patients and make a difference. They highlighted that our imaging is imperative to patients' treatment plans and their recovery in the best scenarios. This experience really proved to me that I was on the right track and going into a sect of medicine that really called to me.

The Program

I was one of sixteen lucky people to be admitted into the 2025 cohort for nuclear medicine at Kaiser Permanente School for Allied Health Sciences. I am now one year into this program with only six months left before we graduate and are ready to take our board exams. Through the program, our instructors and other faculty have been great ambassadors to learning as well as professional development. We have been able to attend one SNMMI meeting so far which led to many great connections. The information available to students during these meetings is mind blowing. I sat with a few nuclear medicine physicians at the meeting and was giving great advice and encouragement for my future as a technologist. Seeing how welcoming the whole nuclear medicine community is really helped me to feel comfortable to ask questions and show my curiosity in all things nuclear medicine. This was also proven when I started clinical training. My clinical instructor as well as the nuclear medicine physician at my first clinical site helped to mold me with a great foundation of knowledge and practice. Every professional in nuclear medicine that I have come in contact with has been a true inspiration.

Conclusion

I am truly grateful to be a future nuclear medicine technologist. Everything that I have learned thus far from instructors, technologists, and physicians, has been vital in my journey into nuclear medicine. I now have an even greater appreciation for what nuclear medicine can do for our patients. We provide scans and services that our patients are desperate and grateful for. Seeing therapy patients with a good response is one of the most rewarding things that I have encountered so far while learning in the clinical setting. I am forever grateful for all of the people that lended to my joy of nuclear medicine and I look forward to becoming just as influential as them for the future generation of nuclear medicine technologists after me.