The Society for Computer Applications in Radiology

THE RADIOLOGY popular press is full of articles and commentaries about the clash between advancing high technology and the need for health care reform. Cost saving has become the paramount issue in medicine. In most instances, the development or expansion of digital imaging has not led to cost savings. Considerable expenditure is needed to replace an existing film-based imaging system with a digital one. Although there may be advantages in doing that, the prospect of making this type of investment under the current economic climate is very intimidating for many radiology administrators.

If we, as radiologists, are to succeed in the future practice of medicine, we will need to do so by providing the best possible consultative service in a timely manner and at reasonable cost. It is unlikely that government administrators will come to our aid and proclaim us as the true defenders of economic virtue—witness the recent attempts to deny radiologists the right to charge for the interpretation of emergency department films. Our time, as radiologists, will best be spent in developing methods to apply digital technology to achieve our goals. The application of teleradiology immediately comes to mind with regard to the emergency department situation. Similarly, advances in digital imaging, such as new applications and new imaging parameters for magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), will be of most immediate benefit to radiologists who are the medical specialists with the most training in dealing specifically with images. Neurologists and orthopedic surgeons may think that they understand MRI, but radiologists are the ones who will be advancing the imaging art. We need to prove to other physicians and administrators that we can

use these new advances in practical, economical ways. For example, not every institution needs a positron-emission tomography scanner. Networking of imaging resources in a collaborative, rather than a competitive fashion, will offer us the best chance of success.

We have recently completed the very successful Symposium on Computer Assisted Radiology that was jointly hosted by The Society for Computer Applications in Radiology, the Committee for Computer Assisted Radiology, and the Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem, NC. This meeting gave us a chance to see the latest in digital applications in medicine, both informatics and imaging. Now it is time to plan ahead for InfoRad 1994, which will be a major part of the Annual Meeting of the Radiological Society of North America, taking place in Chicago from November 26 to December 2. After that, the International Society for Optical Engineers will have its Annual Medical Imaging Symposium from February 26 to March 2, 1995. That meeting will be in San Diego, CA. Also keep on your calendar the biannual Berlin meeting on Computer Assisted Radiology. The dates will be June 21 to 24, 1995. 1995 will coincide with the 100th anniversary of Roentgen's discovery of x-rays. We look forward to seeing you at one or more of those meetings. In the meantime, think digital. Please see page 159 for SCAR membership application form.

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