The Public Information Committee’s (PIC) primary role is to help achieve RSNA’s objective to elevate public awareness and understanding of radiology and the role of radiologists. The PIC accomplishes this by recommending activities in the realm of public information and media relations to the Board as based on needs assessments, the RSNA Strategic Plan, and evaluations of existing public information programs and activities.

The committee has the lead role in developing, directing and monitoring outcomes of RSNA public information projects to help patients understand the role radiology plays in their healthcare. In late 2009 and 2010, these projects included:

- Ongoing press releases from the journal *Radiology*
- Newsroom activities before, during and after the RSNA annual meeting
- *RadiologyInfo.org*, the public information website sponsored jointly with the American College of Radiology
- Oversight of the Public Information Advisors Network (PIAN), an active assembly of more than 140 radiology experts who are available for participation in media activities throughout the year
- Development of talking points and news releases and identifying appropriate experts to comment in response to various hot topics in the news related to radiology
- Development of official RSNA position statements on important and recurring news topics related to radiology
- Patient-centered radiology courses presented at RSNA and other medical meetings
- A workshop to develop a patient-centered radiology presentation that PIAN members could present to their regional radiology and medical organizations
• Collaboration with referring physicians to develop the RSNA 2010 course, “What the Referring Physician Needs to Know”
• 60-Second Check-up, monthly radio segments focused on radiology topics
• Radio public service announcements (PSAs) on radiology-related disease awareness topics

Highlights of public information activities in 2009-2010 include the following:
For the 12-month period ending September 30, 2010, through the monthly Radiology press release program and the 2009 annual meeting newsroom, as well as personal contacts with media outlets, 10,367 print, broadcast and online media placements have been tracked, with a potential of more than 6.2 billion (6,258,420,699) audience members reading, viewing or listening to stories about radiology.

At the Board of Directors’ recommendation and under the committee’s direction, staff continued to maintain high-profile personal contacts in the online, print and television news media throughout the country. Strong relationships between our staff representatives and influential individuals in the media are invaluable for future public information efforts. These contacts help to elevate the media’s consciousness of the resources available at RSNA for verifying or contributing to medical news stories.

PIC and PIAN members have been called on throughout the year to provide commentary or context for key medical news stories. In response to ongoing media interest in specific topics related to radiology and in order to provide accurate, credible and consistent information on these topics, RSNA created official position statements. PIC and select PIAN members were instrumental in the development of these RSNA statements on radiation dose, utilization, medical imaging errors and mammography screening. Once approved by the Board, the statements were made available initially to the PIAN and eventually to all RSNA members via RSNA.org.

To ensure a unified message in response to these and other relevant topics, staff members continue to reach out to their counterparts in other radiology and medical
organizations, as well as hospital and medical school public affairs departments to work cooperatively on local and regional media relations efforts.

The PIC oversees the selection and development of topics for the Annual Meeting Newsroom press conferences. In recent years, committee members have volunteered to moderate the press conferences, enhancing the Q&A portions of the presentations by providing the immediate availability of expert commentary for the media in attendance. Many PIAN members have also assisted as second-opinion experts to help reporters with their stories.

In late 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) released controversial new recommendations regarding mammography screening. To address some of the issues contained in the recommendations and to allay public concern and confusion, a special press briefing with an expert panel on mammography screening was held as part of the press conference lineup at RSNA 2009, drawing national media interest and attendance.

Based on the success of the mammography briefing and in light of a growing number of radiation dose and utilization stories in the news media, a media briefing on radiation safety will be among the press conferences at RSNA 2010, featuring expert commentary on efforts to optimize dose and promote appropriate utilization of medical imaging, including a discussion of the “Image Wisely” initiative developed by the joint ACR-RSNA Joint Task Force on Adult Radiation Protection.

The PIC also works on projects related to patient-centered care to help radiologists become more comfortable in their patient interactions and to make radiologists and radiology more visible to patients. A major component of this initiative has been the refresher course titled “Patient-centered Radiology – Use It or Lose It,” which was presented at the 2006 to 2009 annual meetings. For RSNA 2010, the course has been updated and renamed, “Patient-centered Radiology: It’s Good Business.”
Another ongoing public information project is “60-Second Check-up,” a radio program featuring short segments on topics in radiology geared to the public. PIC and PIAN members and other radiology practitioners and researchers have participated in the production of these pieces, which are played on about 100 radio stations nationally. In addition, radio public service announcements highlighting radiology-related disease awareness topics are distributed to more than 1,200 radio stations for broadcast throughout the year.

The committee will continue to assess the efficacy of all current public information and media relations activities and advise the Board on the Society’s approach to future public and media outreach programs.

I would like to thank the Public Information Committee members, Candice L. Aitken, M.D.; M. Ines Boechat, M.D.; James S. Donaldson, M.D.; Robert J. Herfkens, M.D., David M. Hovsepian, M.D.; Robert K. Kerlan, Jr., M.D.; Deborah Levine, M.D.; Gary J. Whitman, M.D.; Max Wintermark, M.D.; Judy Yee, M.D.; and Robert D. Zimmerman, M.D., for all their hard work and dedication.

On behalf of the PIC, I extend my appreciation to all the members of the Public Information Advisors Network (PIAN) for being ready to provide expert commentary to the media at the annual meeting and throughout the year.

Lastly, I would like to extend my utmost gratitude to the committee’s Board Liaison, Sarah S. Donaldson, M.D., and Board Liaison-designate, William T. Thorwarth Jr., M.D., for their wisdom, their support, and their invaluable contribution to our efforts; and to the entire RSNA Board for its continued support of the committee’s work in enhancing RSNA’s public information program.

Mary C. Mahoney, M.D.
Chair, Public Information Committee