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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NRC STAFF, N.J. HOSPITAL TO DISCUSS FOUR APPARENT VIOLATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff and representatives of St. Peter's Medical Center, New Brunswick, N.J., will meet on Thursday, September 18, to discuss apparent violations of agency requirements regarding the use and handling of radioactive medical materials.

Scheduled to begin at 1 p.m., the predecisional enforcement conference will be held in the public meeting room at the NRC Region 1 office in King of Prussia, Pa. It will be open to the public for observation.

During an inspection conducted at the hospital on August 14, NRC staff determined there had been four apparent violations at the facility: failure to immediately report to the NRC Operations Center that a radioactive source had been lost, transported through unrestricted areas and discovered at another hospital; failure to maintain control of licensed material; failure to take an inventory of sources after the sources were returned to the center's shielded storage location; and failure to conduct surveys to evaluate the presence of potential radiological hazards during and after source calibration procedures.

An incident in November 1995 in which a cesium-137 brachytherapy source was inadvertently transported to another hospital led to the apparent violations.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that the NRC has determined a violation has occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose is to discuss apparent violations, their causes and safety significance; to provide the licensee with an opportunity to point out any errors that may have been made in the NRC inspection report; and to enable the licensee to outline its proposed corrective action.

No decision on the apparent violations will be made at this conference. That decision will be made by NRC officials at a later time.

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