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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NRC PROPOSES TO FINE TEMPLE UNIVERSITY \$10,000
FOR VIOLATIONS INVOLVING RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS, EQUIPMENT

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has proposed \$10,000 in civil penalties against Temple University for two violations of agency guidelines at the Philadelphia, Pa., school's Health Sciences Center. The violations involved a failure to secure licensed radioactive materials and a failure to check the calibration of medical radiation equipment.

NRC also identified four other violations, for which no fines were issued, during inspections conducted on September 30 and October 1, 2, 24 and 25 at the facility.

The first violation to draw a fine -- two examples of which were found -- stems from a discovery by NRC inspectors that the university did not secure from unauthorized removal or limit access to a 2-curie molybdenum 99-technetium generator housed in the school's Nuclear Medicine Department Hot Lab. In addition, small quantities of hydrogen-3, sulfur-35 and iodine-125 were found stored in unlocked refrigerators in unlocked labs. In both cases, there was also a lack of control and constant surveillance of the materials. The NRC believes this violation represents a significant safety and regulatory concern because it could have resulted in the loss or theft of radioactive material, as well as unnecessary radiation exposure for the staff and public.

A failure by a medical physicist, working as a contractor, to perform spot checks of a high-dose remote afterloader's calibration on a monthly basis, as required, led to the second violation to garner a civil penalty.

Other violations included: 1.) a failure to perform a full calibration of the teletherapy unit between June 1994 and August 1995, as required; 2.) a failure to ensure that licensed materials were used only by, or under the supervision of, individuals who are designated by the Temple University Radiation Protection Committee; 3.) a failure to document the level of removable contamination found on packages in the required units; and 4.) a failure to test each dose calibrator for linearity at least quarterly.

"These recent violations indicate a disturbing and declining trend in the performance of Temple University with respect to its NRC license," NRC Region 1 Administrator Hubert J. Miller said in a letter to the university. "The licenses issued to Temple University place a significant responsibility on the management of the University to ensure that activities are conducted safely and in accordance with the terms of the license.

"Notwithstanding that high responsibility," Mr Miller continued, "Temple management has not ensured adherence to NRC requirements, as evidenced by the fact that the enforcement conference conducted with Temple on December 6, 1996, was the third enforcement conference conducted with you since October 1995. In addition, an \$8,000 civil penalty was issued to Temple on December 15, 1995 for a violation involving the discrimination against a former employee who raised safety concerns."

The university has 30 days to pay the proposed fine or to request in writing that part or all of the penalty be withdrawn.

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