



NRC NEWS

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, REGION II

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NRC STAFF TO MEET WITH PUERTO RICO HOSPITAL TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL REGULATIONS

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will hold a pre-decisional enforcement conference with officials of I. González Martínez Oncologic Hospital in Puerto Rico, on Wednesday, February 6. The discussion will focus on a missing and subsequently recovered radioactive implant in March 2001.

The enforcement conference, which is open to public observation, will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the Medical Center, Barrio Monacillos, Rio Piedras. NRC officials will be available after the meeting to answer any questions.

The radioactive implant, containing about 97 millicuries of cesium-137, was discovered to be missing on March 14, 2001, and was found in a trash compactor the next day. An NRC investigation determined that the licensed radioactive material was not intentionally placed in the compactor, but a total of nine apparent violations stemming from the incident have been identified and are being considered for enforcement action. In addition, the hospital is required to perform a radiation dose assessment on all workers or members of the public who may have had access to the areas where the source was located until it was recovered.

The enforcement conference is an opportunity for hospital officials to provide their perspective on the apparent violations stemming from the missing source, and to clarify or correct any information they feel may be inaccurate or incomplete in the NRC's inspection report. No decision on the apparent violations or any enforcement action will be made at the conference. Those decisions will be made later by NRC officials.

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