



NRC NEWS

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NRC DIRECTS STAFF TO EXAMINE FEASIBILITY AND NEED OF STUDY ON RADIATION DOSES TO PUBLIC FROM NUCLEAR MEDICINE

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has directed the agency staff to evaluate the potential need for and feasibility of a study to determine radiation doses to members of the public due to the release of patients treated with medical radioisotopes.

The Commission, in a [Staff Requirements Memorandum](#), said the staff “should evaluate whether there are gaps in the available data regarding doses being received by members of the public due to the release of patients treated with medical isotopes, as well as how the agency could go about collecting additional data, if needed.” The staff was directed to present recommendations for the Commission to vote on.

NRC regulations finalized in 1997 allow patients treated with medical isotopes to be released from a clinic or hospital provided the expected radiation dose to any other individual from the treated patient is not likely to exceed 500 millirem. Doctors are required to give patients written guidance on how to limit exposures to others, especially infants and young children. In recent years, the NRC has expanded the guidance requirement to include advice that patients are strongly discouraged from checking into hotels immediately following treatment.

The Commission said the staff’s study should weigh the direct utility of any additional data-gathering exercise against the potential for intruding upon patient privacy protections, and that the staff should assume written guidance is being followed appropriately, including the recent guidance about hotels. The study should also “fully utilize” previous studies on patient release.

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