



NRC NEWS

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NRC TO DISCUSS APPARENT VIOLATIONS WITH WASHINGTON, D.C., HOSPITAL

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of a Washington, D.C., hospital on Wednesday, February 20, to discuss several apparent violations of NRC regulations related to the use of a specific type of nuclear medicine at the facility.

The meeting, known as a predecisional enforcement conference, pertains to Providence Hospital, which is located at 1150 Varnum Street in Washington, D.C. It is scheduled to begin at 1 p.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the NRC Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa., and will be open to the public for observation.

Based on an inspection conducted last year, the NRC has identified apparent violations involving Providence Hospital's strontium-90 eye applicator program, under which radiation is used to treat eye abnormalities. Specifically, the NRC has determined there were the following apparent failures: 1.) the hospital's Radiation Safety Committee did not oversee the use of licensed material through an annual review of the radiation safety program; 2.) final treatment plans and related calculations were not verified to ensure they were consistent with written directives prepared prior to treatments; 3.) any unintended deviations from the written directives were not identified and evaluated; and 4.) annual audits of the quality management program for the strontium-90 eye treatments were not conducted in 1998, 1999 and 2000.

According to calculations made by the NRC – and subsequently confirmed by the hospital – a total of 14 strontium-90 eye applicator treatments administered between August 1996 and October 2000 exceeded prescribed radiation doses by more than 20 percent and are therefore considered misadministrations. However, a medical consultant hired by the NRC concluded the patients involved did not suffer any adverse effects as a result of the misadministrations.

The decision to hold a predecisional enforcement conference does not mean that the NRC has determined that any violations occurred or that enforcement action will be taken. Rather, the purpose of the meeting is to gather information to assist the NRC in making an enforcement decision.

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