



NRC NEWS

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West Virginia Hospital to Take Corrective Actions Under Settlement Agreement with NRC

A West Virginia hospital system, under a settlement agreement with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is implementing corrective actions and enhancements related to nuclear medicine activities performed at the facility.

The NRC conducted inspections at Cabell Huntington Hospital's facilities, located in Huntington, West Virginia. The agency's Office of Investigations also completed an investigation at the center. The inspection identified 14 apparent violations. The investigation determined one of the apparent violations to be willful with no impact on patient safety.

Eleven of the apparent violations qualified for escalated enforcement. Specifically, there were numerous instances where non-employee physicians received radiological exposures during the administration of nuclear medicine treatments that did not comply with NRC safety requirements. In addition, the medical center possessed an iridium-192 radioactive source at an unlicensed location. There were no public health and safety consequences that resulted from the improper storage.

The apparent violations were detailed in an NRC inspection report issued on June 22, 2022. The report also stated that Cabell Huntington had the option to take part in a pre-decisional enforcement conference or request the use of the Alternative Dispute Resolution process, where conflicts can be resolved using a neutral third party.

Cabell Huntington asked to take part in ADR, and a mediation session was held on August 24, 2022, resulting in a preliminary settlement agreement. The NRC has issued an order confirming the commitments made by medical center staff under that agreement.

Among the corrective actions that will be implemented by the hospital, the majority of which must be completed within the next year, are: a third-party audit of Cabell Huntington's radiation protection program; the completion of a review of the medical center's radiation protection program; a review of the current radiation protection training and revisions to ensure it is consistent with NRC requirements; and the sharing of lessons learned with other medical facility operators through presentations and professional publications. Other steps that have or will be taken by medical center staff include: the development of a centralized radiation safety policy and training on the proper use of radiation-measuring detectors; in-person instruction on the transportation of radioactive materials to and from Cabell Huntington facilities and their subsequent handling; and a

restructuring of its radiation safety committee for better oversight of locations authorized for nuclear medicine services.

The NRC will not impose a civil penalty for the apparent violations as a result of the numerous and comprehensive corrective actions agreed to by Cabell Huntington.