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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NRC PROPOSES \$4,400 FINE AGAINST NEW JERSEY MEDICAL FACILITY
FOR FIRING EMPLOYEE WHO RAISED SAFETY CONCERN**

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$4,400 fine against a New Jersey medical facility for discriminating against an employee who raised a safety concern. Specifically, the NRC has found the Coriell Institute for Medical Research, in Camden, N.J., dismissed the worker in November 1996 after he complained about unnecessary radioactive exposure received while working in a laboratory on Sept. 13, 1996.

A U.S. Department of Labor Administrative Law Judge ruled in December 1997 that discrimination had occurred. On Feb. 26, 1999, a Department of Labor Administrative Review Board agreed with that finding.

Subsequently, the NRC staff held a predecisional enforcement conference on May 3, 1999, to give Coriell an opportunity to present facts about the case. All of the information gathered by the agency led to the NRC decision to fine the medical facility.

"In this case, the discriminatory actions were initiated by the employee's supervisor, and taken by the Vice President. Therefore, this violation has been categorized at Severity Level II," NRC Region I Administrator Hubert J. Miller wrote in a June 2 letter to Coriell notifying it of the decision. The NRC issues four level of violations, with Level I being the worst and Level IV being the least severe.

Coriell has 30 days to pay the fine or to request in writing that all or part of the penalty be withdrawn.

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