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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NRC LICENSING BOARD SCHEDULES PREHEARING CONFERENCE
FOR ONCOLOGY SERVICES, INDIANA (PA) CANCER CENTER

The presiding Atomic Safety and Licensing Board has scheduled a prehearing conference on January 26 in Bethesda, Maryland, in a Nuclear Regulatory Commission proceeding involving a NRC staff order suspending the license of Oncology Services Corporation (OSC) of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The conference concerning this proceeding and a second proceeding involving Indiana (PA) Regional Cancer Center, which also is before this Board, will begin at 9:30 a.m. in the NRC hearing room, Fifth Floor, 4350 East West Highway. To the extent necessary, the conference will continue January 27 at 9:30 a.m. at the same location.

The Oncology Services order, imposed by the NRC staff on January 20, 1993, discontinued OSC's authorization to use iridium-192 sealed sources for treatment of patients suffering with cancer at OSC facilities in Pennsylvania. According to the staff order, a number of incidents demonstrated a "significant corporate management breakdown in the control of licensed activities."

Among other things, the NRC staff order describes the events surrounding a November 16, 1992 incident at OSC's Indiana cancer center "in which a patient was unknowingly exposed to a significant level of radiation, and in which numerous members of the general public received unnecessary radiation exposure." An iridium-192 source broke off in the patient and was not removed before the patient was returned to a nursing home. The source dislodged itself from the patient, who later died.

In the Indiana (PA) Regional Cancer Center proceeding, a NRC staff order of November 22, 1993 suspended the center's license authorizing the use of a strontium-90 source for the treatment of eye conditions and removed its radiation safety officer from activities under the license.

At the conference, the Board will consider appropriate issues for litigation, discovery and the timing and location of any evidentiary hearing. The Board also will explore the relationship between the Oncology Services and Indiana Regional Cancer Center proceedings and whether the Board can conduct some hearing sessions that will produce evidence admissible in both proceedings.

Members of the Licensing Board are the following Administrative Judges from the NRC's Atomic Safety and Licensing Board Panel: G. Paul Bollwerk, III, Chairman; Dr. Charles N. Kelber and Dr. Peter S. Lam.

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