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CONTACT: Jan Strasma 630/829-9663  
Angela Dauginas 630/829-9662  
E-mail: opa3@nrc.gov

\$2,500 FINE AGAINST BLUE SPRINGS, MISSOURI, HOSPITAL FOR  
DELIBERATE VIOLATIONS OF NRC REQUIREMENTS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff has proposed a \$2,500 fine against St. Mary's Hospital of Blue Springs, Blue Springs, Missouri, for deliberately failing to perform some radiation surveys and tests.

The fine is based on the findings of an NRC inspection late last year. The inspection findings and a subsequent predecisional enforcement conference with the hospital in May determined that violations of NRC requirements occurred between July and September of last year.

The NRC inspector noted that on certain dates, particularly on weekends, calibration tests were not being performed as required. Daily tests are required on dose calibrators which are used to verify radiopharmaceutical doses received at the hospital. Since St. Mary's receives precalibrated unit doses from a nuclear pharmacy, there is little likelihood that an improper dose was administered when the dose calibrator was not checked for accuracy.

Also cited was the failure by hospital staff to conduct the required radiation surveys of work areas and packages that were received from the nuclear pharmacy. During several weekends, radiation surveys were not performed at the end of the day in the areas where radiopharmaceuticals were used or administered to patients. Surveys were, however, conducted on weekdays. The NRC inspector, while at St. Mary's, conducted confirmatory surveys which did not detect any areas of contamination.

There were three instances when a package was received at the hospital from the nuclear pharmacy containing radiopharmaceuticals and radiation surveys were not conducted. NRC requires that upon receipt of such a package, surface and area surveys are to be conducted by hospital staff to insure no contamination is present.

In a letter to St. Mary's, NRC's Regional Administrator, A. Bill Beach said:

"...the nuclear medicine technologist failed to perform tests and procedures required by [your] license through complacency, rather than through mistake or error. In this case, the technologist was knowledgeable of the requirements and knew how to perform the tests, but failed as a result of complacency to fulfill the requirements, particularly when working on the weekends. Violations involving careless disregard are considered willful and are of significant concern because the NRC's regulatory programs are based on licensees and their employees acting with integrity."

Following the NRC inspection and predecisional enforcement conference, St. Mary's instituted a monthly review of the technologist's work by the radiation safety officer and increased the time spent by the radiation safety officer attending to radiation safety program activities.

The hospital has until August 22 to pay the fine or to protest it. If the fine is protested and subsequently imposed by the NRC staff, the hospital may request a hearing.

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