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

Nuclear Regulatory Commission staff will meet with representatives of a Washington, D.C., medical facility on Wednesday, June 4, to discuss an apparent violation of agency regulations involving the use of nuclear materials. Specifically, an NRC inspector identified a failure at Howard University Hospital to perform adequate radiological surveys in areas where nuclear medicine materials are used.

The predecisional enforcement conference, which will be open to the public for observation, is scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. in the Public Meeting Room at the NRC Region I Office in King of Prussia, Pa. NRC officials will be available before the conclusion of the meeting to answer questions.

On March 18-19 and April 10, an NRC inspector conducted a safety inspection at the hospital, located on Georgia Avenue, N.W. In the course of that review, the inspector performed a confirmatory radiological survey in areas where licensed nuclear medicine materials are used. This survey was performed after hospital employees had already completed their own end-of-day survey. The NRC inspector discovered eight areas of contamination, which created the potential for radiological exposure to patients, workers and others above regulatory limits. The inspector also determined there were deficiencies in the way the hospital's surveys were conducted. Subsequent surveys by the hospital's radiation safety staff also found areas of contamination.

At the predecisional enforcement conference, hospital officials will have an opportunity to provide their perspectives on the inspection finding and to explain why they may or may not agree with it. The NRC, for its part, will not make any decisions regarding the apparent violation at the conference. Rather, those decisions will be made at a later date by senior agency managers.

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