

July 16, 2003

This Event is not for public disclosure per Agreement State request until 7/21/03

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-03-032

This preliminary notification constitutes EARLY notice of events of POSSIBLE safety or public interest significance. The information is as initially received without verification or evaluation, and is basically all that is known by the Region III staff on this date.

Facility

The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio
License: OH-02110250037
(Agreement State licensee)

Licensee Emergency Classification

Notification of Unusual Event
 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

SUBJECT: MEDICAL EVENT INVOLVING A HIGH-DOSE RATE BRACHYTHERAPY
AFTERLOADER UNIT (UNDERDOSE)

DESCRIPTION:

On July 16, 2003, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) notified the NRC Operations Center of an apparent medical event involving a high-dose rate brachytherapy afterloader unit (HDR). The treatment was performed at The Ohio State University James Cancer Center, located in Columbus, Ohio. It involved treatment of the patient's sinus cavity using a Varian GammaMed Plus HDR unit employing an iridium-192 sealed source. The event is classified as a medical misadministration based on Ohio's current regulations for the medical use of radioactive material.

On July 14, 2003, ODH received notification from the licensee of the apparent medical event which occurred on July 12, 2003. The underdose was caused by miscommunication between the authorized user and the physicist. The intended dose was 1,750 rad but the delivered dose was only 750 rad. The error resulted in a 57 percent underdose.

ODH is performing an on-site investigation of the event. The licensee will submit a written report to ODH within 15 days. The patient and referring physician were notified of the medical event.

The NRC's Office of State and Tribal Programs and Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards have been notified. The NRC's Region III (Chicago) Office is monitoring the State's investigation. This information was discussed with ODH and is current as of 2:00 p.m. CDT on July 16, 2003.

CONTACTS:

James Lynch
(630) 829-9661

Kevin Null
(630) 829-9854