

April 23, 2004

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION OF EVENT OR UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE -- PNO-III-04-005

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

Missouri Baptist Medical Center
St. Louis, Missouri

Docket: 03008325
License: 24-11128-02

Licensee Emergency Classification

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

SUBJECT: BRACHYTHERAPY MEDICAL EVENT

DESCRIPTION:

On April 22, 2004, the licensee reported a medical event associated with a patient that received radiation therapy treatments in February and March 2004. The medical event involved the exposure of an unintended tissue area, the patient's upper thigh, during brachytherapy treatments of the patient for cervical cancer. During a follow-up examination, a physician noticed an area of reddening, about the size of a dime, that was believed to be a result of the unintended exposure.

The patient was being treated using a high-dose-rate afterloader containing 3.5 curies of iridium-192. The licensee intended to provide the treatment to the patient in three fractions of 700 RAD on February 26, March 4, and 11, 2004, for a total planned delivered dose of 2,100 RAD. However, based upon an initial review of the event, the licensee's staff believes that, during one of the treatments, the tubing that goes into the applicator may have come loose and detached from the applicator. As a result, the radiation source may not have reached the intended treatment area. The licensee is continuing its review of the event, including development of an estimate of the dose to the unintended tissue area.

The licensee does not anticipate any adverse effects due to this event. The patient was informed that the area of reddening on her inner thigh was probably due to the radioactive source being in close contact with the skin of the thigh. The referring physician was informed.

A Region III materials inspector will conduct a special inspection to review the circumstances of this event during the week of April 26, 2004. The Region will be contacting a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) medical consultant to review the event.

The Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and the State of Missouri have been notified. The information in this preliminary notification has been reviewed with licensee management.

The licensee notified the NRC Operations Center of this medical event at 8:38 a.m. EST on April 22, 2004. This information is current as of 10:00 a.m. CST on April 23, 2004.

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