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ADDRESSEE:	Nils Diaz		
SUBJECT:	Concerns about criticisms against theexport of highly enriched uranium (HEU) for targets used in the production of medical isotopes		
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April 23, 2004

CHAIRMAN REC'D
04 APR 27 PM 4:17

The Honorable Nils J. Diaz, Ph.D
Chairman
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
One White Flint North Building 11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, M.D. 20852-2738

Dear Chairman Diaz:

On behalf of the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM) and the American College of Nuclear Physicians (ACNP) who represent more than 15,000 physicians, scientists, and nuclear medicine technologists, we are concerned about the recent criticisms that have been levied against the export of highly enriched uranium (HEU) for targets used in the production of medical isotopes.

Several articles have been published recently criticizing the export of HEU required for the production of much needed medical isotopes. The Nuclear Control Institute (NCI) recently submitted a letter petitioning the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to deny the request made by Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) for additional HEU for targets to be used in the NRU reactor for production of medical isotopes. Our patients rely on these important medical isotopes to diagnose and treat heart disease, cancer, and many other illnesses. We are 100 percent reliant on foreign suppliers who have been dependably supplying these essential products and are concerned that the supply of medical isotopes could be interrupted, which would delay or halt life-saving procedures for patients in the United States.

Today, the technology to adequately produce and supply the United States with medical isotopes manufactured from low enriched uranium (LEU) targets does not exist. As a result, the 16 million procedures performed on patients to diagnose and treat illnesses such as heart disease and cancer are being placed in jeopardy by the politicization and misrepresentation of the facts surrounding the supply of medical isotopes. SNM and ACNP believe that all efforts should be made to ensure that the United States is secure as possible from nuclear proliferation threats. We support the conversion to LEU targets when the technology to adequately supply the United States is available, but, in the meantime, it is essential that patients have access to these life-saving medicines. SNM and ACNP believe that it is possible to accomplish the United States' nonproliferation goals and continue to supply the nation with medical isotopes.

In order to ensure a reliable supply of medical isotopes, we urge the NRC to undertake a comprehensive review of the safeguards and security requirements associated with transport and storage of HEU used for targets. This effort will help clarify the misinformation surrounding the export of HEU and will assist in underscoring the importance of medical isotopes to patients in the United States.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please do not hesitate to contact William Uffelman at 703-708-9773 with SNM if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Henry D. Royal, M.D.
President
Society of Nuclear Medicine

Warren H. Moore, M.D.
President
American College of Nuclear Physicians

cc: Commissioner Edward McGaffigan, Jr.
Commissioner Jeffrey S. Merrifield