



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**

REGION III
2443 WARRENVILLE ROAD, SUITE 210
LISLE, ILLINOIS 60532-4352

May 29, 2008

E. Lynn McGuire, Director
National Health Physics Program (115HP/NLR)
Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
2200 Fort Roots Drive
Little Rock, AR 72114

**SUBJECT: NRC INSPECTION REPORT 030-34325/08-17(DNMS) (FORM 591M PART 1)
MEDICAL CENTER, HOUSTON, TEXAS**

Dear Mr. McGuire:

This refers to the inspection conducted on April 29, 2008, at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Medical Center, Houston, Texas. The inspection was limited to a review of activities authorized under Permit No. 42-00084-06. The inspector conducted an exit briefing with the staff at the Medical Center at the completion of the inspection.

Within the program areas reviewed during this inspection, the inspector did not identify any violations of NRC requirements. Therefore, you are not required to respond to this letter.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its enclosure will be available electronically in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). The NRC's document system is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>.

We will gladly discuss any questions you have concerning this inspection.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia J. Pelke".

Patricia J. Pelke, Chief
Materials Licensing Branch

Docket No. 030-34325
License No. 03-23853-01VA
Permit No. 42-00084-06

Enclosure:
Inspection Report 030-34325/08-17(DNMS) (Form 591M Part 1)

SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT AND COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

1. LICENSEE/LOCATION INSPECTED:

Department of Veterans Affairs
 Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center
 202 Holcombe Boulevard
 Houston, Texas 77030-4298
 Permit No. 42-00084-06

2. NRC/REGIONAL OFFICE

USNRC Region IV
 611 Ryan Plaza Drive
 Arlington, Texas 76011-4005

REPORT NUMBER(S) 2008-017

3. DOCKET NUMBER(S)

030-34325

4. LICENSEE NUMBER(S)

03-23853-01VA

5. DATE(S) OF INSPECTION

April 29, 2008

LICENSEE:

The inspection was an examination of the activities conducted under your license as they relate to radiation safety and to compliance with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) rules and regulations and the conditions of your license. The inspection consisted of selective examinations of procedures and representative records, interviews with personnel, and observations by the inspector. The inspection findings are as follows:

- 1. Based on the inspection findings, no violations were identified.
- 2. Previous violation(s) closed.
- 3. The violation(s), specifically described to you by the inspector as non-cited violations, are not being cited because they were self-identified, non-repetitive, and corrective action was or is being taken, and the remaining criteria in the NRC Enforcement Policy to exercise discretion, were satisfied.

_____ Non-Cited Violation(s) was/were discussed involving the following requirement(s) and Corrective Action(s):

- 4. During this inspection certain of your activities, as described below and/or attached, were in violation of NRC requirements and are being cited. This form is a NOTICE OF VIOLATION, which may be subject to posting in accordance 10 CFR 19.11.

(Violations and Corrective Actions)

Licensee's Statement of Corrective Actions for Item 4, above.

I hereby state that, within 30 days, the actions described by me to the inspector will be taken to correct the violations identified. This statement of corrective actions is made in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR 2.201 (corrective steps already taken, corrective steps which will be taken, date when full compliance will be achieved). I understand that no further written response to NRC will be required, unless specifically requested.

Title	Printed Name	Signature	Date
LICENSEE'S REPRESENTATIVE			
NRC INSPECTOR	Richard Leonardi		5/29/08

(1/2008 edited by RIV)
10 CFR 2.201

Docket File Information
SAFETY INSPECTION REPORT AND COMPLIANCE INSPECTION



1. LICENSEE Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center REPORT NUMBER(S) 2008-017		2. NRC/REGIONAL OFFICE USNRC Region IV	
3. DOCKET NUMBER(S) 030-34325		4. LICENSE NUMBER(S) 03-23853-01VA	5. DATE(S) OF INSPECTION April 29, 2008
6. INSPECTION PROCEDURES USED 87134		7. INSPECTION FOCUS AREAS FA 1-7	

SUPPLEMENTAL INSPECTION INFORMATION

1. PROGRAM CODE(S) 2110	2. PRIORITY	3. LICENSEE CONTACT Jeff Tribel, RSO	4. TELEPHONE NUMBER Stan Bravenec @ 713 794-7188
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Main Office Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> Field Office Inspection <input type="checkbox"/> Temporary Job Site Inspection		Next Inspection Date: _____	

PROGRAM SCOPE

This safety inspection was an assist inspection for NRC Region III which holds the Department of Veterans Affairs' Master Materials License (MML). The inspector was accompanied by Gary Williams with the NHPP staff during the entire inspection.

The last NRC inspection was performed August 7-8, 2003, and the last NHPP inspection was performed March 11-12, 2008.

The inspector conducted brief entrance briefing with staff in the Director's office. The RSO and ARSO were contacted and the ARSO was the POC for the remaining of the inspection. The inspector noted that no organizational changes had occurred since the last NRC inspection of August 2003 with the exception of the RSO being designated as the Center's Safety Manager. Radiation safety is managed by a RSO (5% duties), ARSO (100% duties), Safety Specialist (P.T. with 5% duties), and a RSC that meets quarterly. RSO reports to the Center's Facilities Management Service.

Permitted activities include a busy nuclear medicine department, no brachytherapy ongoing, and a significantly reduced research program. The inspection noted (for the past year) that in nuclear medicine, the permittee used 7 FT NMTs, and performed: ~37 diagnostic nuclear med procedures/day; ~16 (I-131) NaI therapies (> 33 mCi)/year for both inpatient and outpatients; and ~15 in-house PET studies/week. Permittee refers all brachytherapy cases to local private hospitals, as well the VAMC in Jackson, Mississippi, for prostate therapies. Inspector visited the nuclear medicine hot lab, various imaging rooms, remote radwaste storage room, and the dedicated PET imaging department. Numerous staff interviews were performed including staff in nuclear medicine, radiation therapy, PET imaging, nursing, and the permittee's RSO and ARSO.

No inpatient and/or outpatient radiopharmaceutical therapies were ongoing at the time of the inspection. Inspector performed numerous ambient radiation area surveys in both restricted and unrestricted areas and found no radiation levels in excess of regulatory limits.

Inspector observed the injection of patients in nuclear medicine, imaging of injected patients, and the preparation of unit doses for patient injections.

Inspector performed radiation area surveys using a Ludlum Model 2401-EC2 (SN 159827), last calibrated 7/9/2007.

NO safety concerns or violations were identified during the inspection.