

DLD

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.

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Facility: William Beaumont Hospital Licensee Emergency
 Royal Oak, Michigan Classification:
 Unusual Event
 License No. 21-01333-01 Alert
 Site Area Emergency
 General Emergency
 Not Applicable

3002006

Subject: LOST BRACHYTHERAPY SOURCES

On November 5, 1989, the licensee reported the loss of six iodine-125 brachytherapy seeds. The seeds were inserted in a nylon ribbon which was one of 21 ribbons sutured to the base of a patient's tongue undergoing cancer therapy. The treatment began October 31, 1989, and continued through November 3, 1989 when the ribbons were removed.

During an inventory of the ribbons on November 4, 1989, licensee personnel noted that one of the ribbons was not sealed properly and that six seeds were missing. Each seed contains 1.5 millicuries of iodine-125 and is about 4 millimeters in length. The radiation level for each seed is about 1 rad per hour at a distance of 1 centimeter. As such, the seeds could represent a safety hazard if carried close to a person's body for a long period of time.

After the seeds were found to be missing, the licensee performed radiation surveys of the patient and her clothing, the patient's room, hallways, elevators, laundry facilities and trash cans. Although the survey of the patient's room was hampered somewhat because the room is now occupied by another patient being treated with cesium-137, three of the six iodine-125 seeds were found in the room and placed in storage. The remaining three seeds have not been located.

The licensee has notified hospital personnel of the event and has instructed them on precautions to take if the seeds are found. The licensee is going to continue its recovery efforts which is going to include a detailed survey of the patient's room on November 6, 1989 following the discharge of the patient being treated with cesium-137. The licensee is also reviewing the patient's treatment plan to determine if the patient received sufficient treatment since it is possible that the six seeds could have been dislodged prior to the ribbons being sutured into the patient's mouth.

Region III (Chicago) is monitoring the licensee's search efforts and will conduct a special inspection to review the circumstances of the loss of the seeds.

The State of Michigan has been notified.

Region III was notified of the loss of the sources at 9 a.m. (CST) on November 5, 1989. This information is current as of 11:30 a.m. on November 6, 1989.

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