



NRC NEWS

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OPENING REMARKS OF NRC CHAIRMAN GREGORY B. JACZKO AT TODAY'S MEETING ON THE PROPOSED RULE ON THE DEFINITION OF MEDICAL EVENTS

Good afternoon. The Commission meets today to discuss the draft proposed rule on the definition of medical events. The NRC has the responsibility to protect patient and worker safety by assuring the proper use of radioactive materials by medical facilities. The medical events definition is one tool the agency uses to identify potential problems in a licensee's use of these materials. Determining whether the current definition or an alternative definition would best do that is one subject of today's Commission meeting.

In 2008, the agency developed a proposed rule that would have changed most criteria for defining a medical event from dose- to activity-based for permanent implant brachytherapy. After reviewing the medical events at the Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center, the staff concluded that a number of those incidents likely would not have been categorized as medical events under the 2008 proposed rule. Since that would have been inconsistent with the original regulatory intent of identifying medical events more efficiently and effectively, the staff reevaluated the 2008 proposal and revised it to reflect this new information.

This issue has elicited a wide range of opinions among the agency staff, our licensees, and our stakeholders. The Commission looks forward to a productive discussion today. We will begin this morning with the staff presentations, and then hear from a panel of stakeholders, who have provided comments on this rulemaking.

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