

State of North Carolina
 Department of Environment,
 Health and Natural Resources

Division of Radiation Protection

James B. Hunt, Jr., Governor
 Jonathan B. Howes, Secretary
 Dayne H. Brown, Director



MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Use Accelerator Licensees

FROM: J. Robin Haden, Chief
 Radioactive Materials Section

DATE: June 23, 1994

SUBJECT: Coverage by an Authorized User

Recent inspections of hospitals and clinics licensed for accelerator treatment of humans have revealed that in some cases the authorized users and radiation safety officers do not clearly understand that this Agency expects there to be an authorized user physically available at the facility while patients are being treated. The Section .0900 of the North Carolina Regulations for Protection Against Radiation allows for the training and use of ancillary personnel as operators of the accelerators. This is intended to free the authorized user from actually having to run the unit(s). The training for operators outlined in the regulations is sufficient only for them to handle routine operations of the machine. It is not sufficient for them to assume responsibility for patient emergencies, machine emergencies or general radiation safety emergencies. When authorized users leave ancillary staff unattended to treat patients, the staff is clearly left in a situation for which they are not qualified on a regulatory level.

It is possible for accelerator licenses to include a license condition that governs the use of a visiting physician for a period not to exceed 60 days in one year. If your facility has only one authorized user and your license does not have the condition, you should submit a request to add it. If your facility has a number of authorized users, you should instruct them in how to arrange appropriate coverage for the facility while patients are being treated. It is not necessary, in the case of multiple authorized users, for the authorized user present to be the patient's physician. The intent is that someone that meets the requirements for an authorized user be present to answer questions from patients, patient families and the technical staff and to handle any other incident that might occur.

I encourage you to review your program to ensure that this requirement is met. The information will be reviewed during our routine inspections. The inspection frequency for accelerator facilities is once per year. In addition, these inspections are now normally unannounced.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Wendy B. Tingle of my staff.