



Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors, Inc.

NEWSBRIEF

www.crcpd.org

A Partnership Dedicated to Radiation Protection

February 2010

Message from Chairperson Adela Salame-Alfie, Ph.D.



Greetings everybody,

It's been a crazy winter! I can't believe that there was snow in San Diego, California, this morning, Washington DC and a big chunk of the I-95 corridor were covered with over three feet of snow, and when I looked out my window I could see the grass in my backyard!!!

As I was driving home from work this evening and was listening to the radio (I believe they were talking about the federal government being shut down for the last four days), I couldn't help but think about our Continuity of Operations (COOP) plans. I wonder how many agencies, local, state and federal, executed their COOP plan. I'd like to know if you did, and how it went.

This certainly was a good test!

But I'm sure you've had enough about the weather and its aftermath, so...

I would like to use this opportunity to give you an update on some of the things that we (both the Board and Ruth) have been doing over the last few months. You've heard about some of these activities since we've tried to keep you updated, but we are aware of the enormous amounts of e-mail you may get on a daily basis, and we try not to bombard with information or requests for surveys unless it is really important.

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We have been in communication with folks from LA County and the FDA regarding the CT overexposures. In addition to having sent you a CT protocol, we are in the process of staffing a task force that will, among other things, develop a survey using the lessons learned from the CT surveys conducted by LA County. We will be developing a CRCPD model survey that we can provide for your use to gather information when you

**Chairperson's
Message**
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or your staff go out on inspections. We are making sure to keep the members of the CT committee involved to make sure we stay consistent with our other CT documents/protocols.

If you have seen the news lately, you may have come across a series of articles in the New York Times regarding medical misadministrations. This issue is not new to us, and if you were present at the last Business Meeting (during the Annual Meeting) you would recall that we discussed this issue and the need to create a national database. As a matter of fact, we have created a task force to initiate that activity and are in the process of getting the members, advisors and resource people set-up so we can start working on it.

Of course, timing is everything, and this issue has gained quite a bit of momentum. As a result of these articles, the societies and associations promptly mobilized and put out press statements. The FDA put out a press release too. We wanted to make sure we were not behind the curve, so we too provided a short statement to the *New York Times* describing our ongoing efforts in addressing some of the issues reported in the article, and pointing them to our web site so they can learn about us. That information, titled "CRCPD to Pilot Tracking System for Machine-Based Radiation Medical Events," is reprinted following Ruth's article. This information is also available on our website at http://www.crcpd.org/MachineBasedRadMedEvents/crcpd_to_pilot_tracking_system.aspx, and there is a direct link to this information from our home page.

You should also know that the following were called to testify at a Congressional hearing:

- American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), College Park, MD -- Michael G. Herman, Ph.D., president of the AAPM
- American Society for Radiation Oncology (ASTRO), Fairfax, VA -- Dr. Tim R. Williams, chairman
- American College of Radiology (ACR), Reston, VA -- speaker not yet specified
- American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT), Albuquerque, NM -- Sandra Hayden, member of the ASRT board of directors
- Medical Imaging and Technology Alliance (MITA), Arlington, VA -- Dave Fisher, managing director

As of this writing, the hearing has been postponed due to the snow.

Chairperson's Message

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In our effort to be proactive and productive in the area of tracking medical events, we quickly put together a proposal to organize a roundtable to discuss how best to approach developing this national database of medical events and we've shared it with some of our Radiation Protection Advisory Council members. We talked about inviting professionals from the societies/associations listed above plus others. Stay tuned for additional information on this effort. And, please remember that any feedback on that effort is certainly welcome. As you can guess, Jennifer Elee, Mary Ann Spohrer, John Winston and Ruth McBurney have been instrumental in pursuing these efforts.

But if you know CRCPD, you know that we don't just work on one issue at a time... For example, Mike Gilley went to Vienna with NRC staff to represent CRCPD at the IAEA technical meeting to revise the Basic Safety Standards on Radon and its impact on regulatory requirements. You will find a trip report in this *Newsbrief*. I'm sure he'd like to chat with you about it during the Annual Meeting.

And, thanks to Earl Fordham's diligence (and lots of patience), we've managed to get some of the Suggested State Regulations into the peer review and approval process. Kim Steves' Homeland Security Council has also been very busy working on getting the Alliance for National Readiness off the ground. The Alliance for National Readiness is the proposed name for a CDC-facilitated, formal alliance of public health organizations (CRCPD, NACCHO, ASTHO, CSTE, APHL), whose purpose is to expand communication and partnerships, leverage existing resources, and enable enhanced radiological emergency preparedness capacity in public health, nationwide. For more details on committee and/or council activities, please check their reports in the next few pages or contact the Council chairs directly.

By the way, have you checked the Annual Meeting agenda yet? If you have, you will see that we have a great program scheduled. We also have several training sessions designed to fit your needs and likes. We are planning several special interest meetings to discuss hot topics such as the CT overexposures and the radiation medical events database. For the latest information on the program, please go to our website and check it out! We really hope to see you there!

Did you vote for Board members? Were you surprised that this year we decided to conduct our election of Board members electronically? We are trying to keep up with technology (even those of us over 50...) and we hope that this process is easier for

Chairperson's Message

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everyone. Please give us some feedback (trust me, we listen to you).

Over the next few weeks you will be receiving an email with our current strategic plan. As some of you may know, every five years we have an opportunity to review it and make changes if necessary. We will vote on it during the second Business Meeting. Please take a look and let me know if you have comments, questions, suggestions, etc., so we can take them into consideration. If necessary, we can schedule a members forum to address specific questions or issues prior to voting on the strategic plan.

OK folks, I think it is time to wrap this one up. Please feel free to keep us informed of upcoming issues. I like for us to be vigilant and proactive (realizing that many times we have no choice but to be reactive), and remember that even if you think the issue you are dealing with is unique to your locality/state, you would be surprised to find out that many times it is not. We can't do it all by ourselves, so it is important that we continue to pull together as an organization and continue to develop products, reports, protocols, regulations, etc., that we can share so we don't have to start from scratch every time.

Thanks for your support in our activities, and I'm really looking forward to seeing you in Rhode Island!



Ahoy, set sail for Newport!

Having lived in land-locked areas all of my life, I am really excited the National Conference on Radiation Control will be in the coastal city of Newport, Rhode Island this year (April 19-22, 2010). In fact, we will be surrounded by water at the meeting location, the Hyatt Goat Island (goats really did graze there once upon a time).

The Conference promises to provide attendees with opportunities to:

- Network with state and federal agency representatives as well as colleagues from the medical and industrial radiation community;
- Learn about new technologies and radiation protection tools and procedures; and
- See some terrific sights and enjoy the local attractions and food of Newport.

Greetings from Your Executive Director



Ruth E. McBurney, CHP

Greetings from Your Executive Director

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The Technical Program Planning Committee has arranged a great agenda for this year's meeting, the theme of which is "Opportunities and Innovations in Radiation Protection." Although this year's Conference is taking place only about 11 months following the 2009 Conference in Columbus, the past year has been full of many new challenges, changes, and cooperative efforts. Many of the presentations at this year's meeting will address the new innovations in radiation therapy and diagnostic procedures, radiation protection, and emergency preparedness and response. Changes in international radiation protection standards and the potential impact on U.S. standards will be presented and discussed in depth. Other innovative ideas on doing more with less and doing better together will also be presented.

In addition to the great technical program, there are multiple training opportunities in conjunction with the National Conference, including:

- Mammography training for inspectors (two days)
- Brachytherapy
- E-brachytherapy and eye applicators
- Laboratory Incidents for Managers, and
- Turbo FRMAC

Several hot topics and emerging regulatory and emergency preparedness issues are deserving of more time for discussion by the state program representatives. We have scheduled several special interest meetings for a more open discussion of some of these issues and how state and federal government agencies and professional organizations can address them and find workable solutions.

With all this going on, I hope you will still find time to enjoy the great venue of Newport—the mansions, museums, sailboats, the Cliff Walk, and the great seafood! Check out details of the meeting at www.crcpd.org and the link included for activities in Newport as well.

I hope you will join us for this year's National Conference on Radiation Control in Newport. Sail on in!



CRCPD to Pilot Tracking System for Machine-Based Radiation Medical Events

The Conference of Radiation Control Program Directors (CRCPD), a national non-governmental professional organization dedicated to radiation protection, has identified medical radiation overexposures and misadministration as an important issue. Recent articles in the press have brought medical events involving radiation machines to the public's attention, such as those in the following links:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/27/us/27radiation.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/24/health/24radiation.html>

However, for the past several years, CRCPD members had become concerned that such events should be reported, investigated, and tracked. The CRCPD's Suggested State Regulations for Control of Radiation Part X on Medical Therapy contains a provision that requires the reporting of therapy misadministrations. In addition, the feasibility of a national database of such events was discussed at the CRCPD Business Meeting during the May 2009 National Conference on Radiation Control.

Although the overall benefit and safety record for radiation therapy and other radiation procedures is quite high, errors in administration should be tracked for causes and trends. The CRCPD is in the process of staffing a committee to develop a pilot project to collect data on radiation machine-based events from state radiation control programs that will take into account states differences in laws/regulations regarding reporting and confidentiality.

The charges of the committee are as follows:

1. Develop a definition of reportable events to include radiation therapy using linear accelerators and e-brachytherapy technology, as well as high dose diagnostic procedures such as computed tomography (CT) and fluoroscopy.
2. Develop/maintain a format and mechanism for state programs to provide the committee with details of reportable events.
3. Review submitted reports for completeness and accuracy, and develop notices to the state programs when necessary.
4. Oversee the development and maintenance of a CRCPD database of reportable events.
5. Prepare an annual summary report for the CRCPD Board and the *Newsbrief*.
6. Provide a verbal report at the Annual Meeting.

The data reporting will be done on a voluntary basis and will be used to inform and educate interested parties on trends, root causes, and methods for improvement.



42nd National Conference on Radiation Control

The 42nd National Conference on Radiation Control will be held at the Hyatt Regency Newport Hotel, One Goat Island, Newport, Rhode Island, April 19-22, 2010. This year's theme is Opportunities and Innovations in Radiation Protection.

For all the latest information about the conference, go to <http://www.crcpd.org/2010AnnualMeeting.aspx>

Online registration is available at <http://crcpd.org/PortalTools/Login.cfm>.



Image Gently Alliance

By Mary Ann Spohrer
Healing Arts Council
Chairperson (IL)

The Image Gently Alliance is a coalition of healthcare organizations dedicated to providing safe, high quality pediatric imaging nationwide. The Image Gently Campaign began as an initiative of the Alliance for Radiation Safety in Pediatric Imaging but is now an Alliance with the goal of changing practice by increasing awareness of the opportunities to lower radiation dose in the imaging of children. The Conference of Radiation Control Program Director's, Inc. is one of approximately 52 healthcare related organizations that are members of the Alliance that includes a number of international organizations in addition to various organization throughout the U.S.

In December 2009, at a meeting held in conjunction with the RSNA, the Alliance organizers gave an overview of the Image Gently Campaign's activities since its inception in 2007. They indicated that the number of Alliance organizations has grown from 33 in November 2008 to over 50 as of November 2009. They also have added members from the international arena and were talking to representatives of the IAEA as well as the WHO regarding their interest in becoming Alliance members.

The Image Gently Campaign has a website (www.imagegently.org) where educational materials are available for download. The Alliance has unveiled two successful and ongoing campaigns specifically related to pediatric imaging and lower radiation doses. The first campaign was directed at CT studies and the most recent one, known as Step Gently, is focused on interventional radiology. It is worthwhile to visit the website and become familiar with the educational products and materials available so that state regulators can in turn bring this information to their registrants and directly in the hands of the healthcare providers who can make the difference when exposing pediatric patients to radiation.

Image Gently Alliance

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The most recent activity of the Image Gently Campaign was to host the Image Gently Pediatric Digital Radiology Summit held on February 4, 2010 in St. Louis, Missouri. The summit provided an overview of CR and DR and the image issues involved with each of these technologies. Radiologists, technologists, medical physicists and x-ray machine manufacturers all presented information from their various perspectives. One area that received a lot of attention was education and how vendors and users can better educate each other on the use/misuse of the imaging equipment. Both the morning and afternoon sessions included panel discussions and question and answer periods with all represented parties. Additional members participating in the summit were pediatric practitioners as well as various regulatory professionals. Specific information for this Summit, including power point presentations, is available through Sue Smith <ssmith@crcpd.org> at the OED for anyone that is interested.



CR/DR Training Available through CRCPD

By Mary Ann Spohrer
Healing Arts Council Chair

At the 41st annual National Conference on Radiation Control the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM), along with the H-33 Task Force on the Inspection Protocol of Diagnostic X-Ray Facilities Using CR/DR Technology, conducted two days of training pertaining to CR/DR technology. The first day's training was provided by the Task Force and covered a suggested protocol that state inspectors could use when surveying registrants that utilize the technology of Computed Radiography (CR) or Direct Radiography (DR) in their practices. The second day of training was sponsored by the AAPM and included a number of presentations on the QA/QC procedures of various manufactures of these technologies. Following the training session, the H-33 Task Force, chaired by Mike Odlaug of Washington, put the finishing touches on the protocol and the protocol was published by CRCPD in January 2010.

CRCPD is offering assistance with training based on this protocol at a state's request. The training provided can be adapted to fit the needs of a particular state but would be based on the published protocol. Considerations for training include facility visits that utilize one or both of these technologies, lecture notes/power point presentations on the protocol and possible technical presentations on aspects of the technologies. If any state is interested in this training, they should contact Sue Smith <ssmith@crcpd.org> at CRCPD.



Report on IAEA's Technical Meeting

By Michael Gilley
CRCPD Chair-Elect (FL)

Representatives of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission invited CRCPD and an EPA representative to participate in the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) technical meeting in Vienna, Austria, on December 15 & 16, 2009. The purpose of the meeting was the revision of the Basic Safety Standards (BSS) on radon and the impact on current regulatory requirements.

The IAEA's BSS was issued first in 1962, revised in 1967, 1982 and 1996, and is being revised to take into account the recent recommendations of the United Nations Scientific Committee on Effects of Atomic Radiation 2006, new biological and physical information, and current trends in radiation safety. Participation in this meeting allowed CRCPD to input the states' extensive knowledge of and experiences concerning radon and to reconfirm and advance CRCPD as a valued participant in the development of international radiation policy and the regulation field.

The meeting's purpose was to evaluate and discuss the most recent scientific evidence on radon and focus on developing recommendations and requirements for various work places and for dwellings. The outcome of this meeting would be incorporated in the draft revision of the BSS. Technical experts and policy makers from 48 member countries and 9 partner organizations participated.

The meeting began with a seminar and discussion on the latest scientific evidence on the risks from radon exposures, recent ICRP recommendations (ICRP 103 and 104), and the World Health Organization's Handbook on Radon (2009). Two concurrent plenary sessions were held to discuss and reach consensus on the development of new requirements to control exposures in mines, other above- and below-ground workplaces, NORM industries, and for residential dwellings.

Recommendations for the draft BSS were developed and included:

- Protection policy for exposures in dwellings and buildings where the public may spend a large portion of time;
- Protection policy for workers in occupational, planned exposure situations (non-adventitious); and
- Protection policy for workers in existing exposure situations where radon exposures are adventitious and not an integral part of the work.

These recommendations will be included in the upcoming BSS draft to be distributed to IAEA's member states and organizations for comment this fall.



Retirement Celebrations

By Michael Gilley, CRCPD
Chair-Elect (FL)



As too many of our members have done recently, Kirk Whatley, Director of the Alabama Office of Radiation Control (ORC), retired December 31, 2009 after a long and rich career. The Alabama ORC staff, long-time colleagues and friends, and members of his immediate family gathered the afternoon of November 23rd to celebrate. Among the many kudos and accolades bestowed at the retirement reception, Kirk was recognized and shown our appreciation for his many years of service to CRCPD, a service that benefited all citizens in the United States against unnecessary radiation exposure. Kirk was granted “Life Membership” and presented a resolution noting his service to CRCPD over the years, including:

- Board of Directors Member and serving as Chair of the General Council May 1993 to May 1996;
- Serving on one of CRCPD’s first committees, regarding NARM;
- Developing Licensing State Criteria;
- Serving as Chair of the G-9 Committee for Resolutions;
- Serving as Coordinator for Awards;
- Serving as a member to the HS/ER-6 Task Force for Development of CRCPD Comments on the EPA Protective Action Guidelines;
- Advisor to HS/ER-9 Task Force for the Supplement to RDD Handbook;
- Representing the States on the use of radionuclides in medicine before the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission; &
- Awarded the Board of Directors Outstanding Achievement Award in 1989.

In an emailed “thank you” in typical Whatley-style, Kirk wrote:

“One of the hard things about leaving a place that you care about is leaving the people that you care about. That includes friends that you have known a long time in other state programs. I didn’t want to have anything such as a reception, but the staff insisted - and I’m glad they did. It was difficult though as emotions tried to take over and fog what was going on. I know that I left people out and didn’t get to talk to as many as I should have.”

Kirk, it is you who we will miss. It is our sincere wish that you have a pleasant, relaxing, and rewarding retirement, but don’t stay gone too long.



CRCPD Working Group & Liaison Activities



Nuclear Power Plant Press Releases and FAQs Now Available

By Kim Steves, Homeland Security/Emergency Response Council Chairperson

The HS/ER-8 “Task Force to Develop Nuclear Power Plant News Releases” has completed the assembly of a library of draft press releases for use during the different phases of a nuclear power plant incident and a set of frequently asked questions and answers.

This information is available free of charge on the CRCPD website by selecting Publications/Free Downloads/Homeland Security: <http://www.crcpd.org/HomelandSecurityPubs.aspx>

This library of press releases is intended to be used as a reference source by member organizations for their own preparedness planning and response for drills, exercises, and actual events at nuclear facilities impacting their jurisdictions.

The Task Force began this task by soliciting samples of press releases already developed by CRCPD members. Numerous sample press releases were received and the Task Force reviewed and categorized each one by subject and phase of an incident. The library is organized into two sections: Plume Phase and Post-Plume Phase of an incident. A wide variety of topics are covered.

The Frequently Asked Questions list contains 45 questions that may be asked by members of the public, with suggested answers and responses.

Plans are underway to assemble a library of draft press releases pertaining to a radiological terrorism event. If you are interested in volunteering to assist on this project, please contact the HS/ER Council Chair, Kim Steves, at ksteves@kdheks.gov.



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The Newsbrief is written to address the needs of all radiation control program personnel. Readers are encouraged to contribute newsworthy or informative items for the Newsbrief, with neither charges nor stipends for the items that are selected. News of state radiation control programs is especially sought.

Articles should be sent to CRCPD, Attn: Sue Smith, 1030 Burlington Lane, Suite 4B, Frankfort, KY 40601 (fax: 502/227-7862; email: <ssmith@crcpd.org>). The deadline for contributions is the 15th of the month before an issue is to be published.

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