February 16, 2010

Dear Nuclear Medicine Professional,

Covidien is pleased to announce an agreement with the Institute of Atomic Energy (IAE POLATOM) in Poland to augment and further diversify the world’s supply of molybdenum 99 (Mo 99) to produce technetium 99m (Tc 99m). Adding the IAE POLATOM’s Maria Research Reactor (Maria) to the global supply chain will allow Covidien to meet the needs of more than one million additional patients worldwide in just the first six months.

We are pleased to announce this additional Mo 99 source prior to the imminent shutdown of the High Flux Reactor (HFR) in Petten, the Netherlands, on February 19. The HFR is scheduled to be offline for repairs for an estimated six months¹. The remaining major operating reactors in Belgium, France and South Africa also will continue to supply Covidien throughout the HFR shutdown and the continued offline status of the National Research Universal (NRU) reactor in Canada².

Our agreement with IAE POLATOM culminates more than six months’ collaboration, investment and significant effort between Covidien and IAE POLATOM. Processing of Mo 99 produced during a test irradiation at the Maria Research Reactor last week currently is underway at our facility in the Netherlands. Tc 99m derived from Mo 99 from Maria should be commercially available to help meet European needs within 30 days.

Use of Mo 99 obtained from Maria for production of generators used in the U.S. is pending U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval. Until approval is received, Covidien’s overall available Mo 99 will be equitably distributed globally—shifting supply from current sources when needed so all regions may share the benefit of this new reactor source—as we have done throughout this situation.

Based on currently operating reactor supply estimates, with the inclusion of Maria, daily projection calendars for Tc 99m generators in the United States through April are shown below. When compared to previous projections, these calendars show improved expectations during certain dates as a reflection of the Mo 99 from Maria. As always, projections are subject to change.

Please note: We have further refined the color-coding of our calendars to provide an even clearer view of anticipated daily supply. Going forward, the five-level system outlined in the key below will be utilized. This key reflects expectations for both generators and unit dose Tc 99m.
As you can see from the calendars above, even with this additional Mo 99 resource, there are still periods of shortages due to reactor schedules. Your careful patient scheduling will continue to provide greater access to those most critically in need, as will planning for the most efficient use of Tc 99m. We also continue to increase production of thallium Tl 201 for those procedures where it can be a clinically appropriate substitute.

This historic agreement marks the first time in decades that a new reactor has been brought into the global supply chain for medical isotopes. It is further evidence of Covidien’s commitment and investment in maximizing patient access to vital nuclear medicine procedures to help diagnose disease. Past examples include our long-standing diversified supply chain, additional reactor target positions and the additional BR2 reactor cycle in June.

We remain committed to frequent communication throughout this situation, and will provide additional updates as new information becomes available. To learn more about the current Mo 99 supply situation and Maria, please visit www.covidien.com/Mo99supply.

Sincerely,

Elaine E. Haynes, RPh
Vice President & General Manager, U.S. Commercial Operations, Imaging

2. NRU Status Report #42 “AECL provides update on NRU activities” (last accessed 2/10/10) http://www.aecl.ca/NewsRoom/Community_Bulletins/100210.htm
   Updates are posted to the AECL site each Wednesday, where you may check back for status reports.