March 26, 2010

Dear Nuclear Medicine Professional,

Last weekend, Covidien manufactured Technetium 99m (Tc 99m) generators at our Maryland Heights, MO, facility using Molybdenum 99 (Mo 99) derived from the Maria Research Reactor (Maria) for the first time following U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. We also manufactured generators at our facility in the Netherlands, where we had previously used Mo 99 derived from the Maria reactor in mid-February.

On Monday, March 29, we again expect to manufacture generators derived from Maria Mo 99 for distribution in the Americas, and expect double the original projected volume. An accelerated increase in irradiation capacity is expected to boost the available Mo 99 on each Maria production date going forward.

Patients from around the world are now receiving critical diagnostic studies they might otherwise have deferred as a result of this new global medical isotope source. As announced in February, adding the Polish Institute of Atomic Energy’s Maria reactor 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.

The High Flux Reactor (HFR) in the Netherlands remains down as scheduled through mid-August, and the National Research Universal reactor in Canada is not expected to return until late July. The BR2 reactor in Belgium is also offline during May for routine maintenance. Based on updated supply estimates from the Maria, BR2, Osiris (France) and Safari (South Africa) reactors, daily projection calendars for Tc 99m generators in the Americas through May are shown below. When compared to previous projections, these calendars show improved expectations on certain dates, for example March 29 and April 8. As always, projections are subject to change.

NOTE:
We have added a new designation to the calendars to reflect generator production dates that are added due to timing of Mo 99 available supply. These special dates are indicated by an exclamation point (!). (For example, see April 8 and May 20.)
As you can see, May will have periods of extreme shortage. The Covidien-Maria relationship is especially well timed; the bright spots expected on May 9-10, 20-21 and 28-29 are due to Maria supplied Mo 99. It is important to bear in mind that the color coding reflects the day a generator is manufactured, with delivery the following day and use of the Tc 99m from that generator well beyond the original production date to supply patient procedures.

We are also providing a glimpse of projected supply for June from a weekly view, which is shown on the calendar at left. It is clearly much better for most of the month, and is aided by the additional irradiation cycle at BR2 which Covidien helped fund. July and August also appear positive at this time.

Your careful scheduling of patients will continue to provide greater access to those most critically in need, as well planning for the most efficient use of Tc 99m. We also continue to increase production of thallium Tl 201 within our supply capacity for those procedures where it can be a clinically appropriate substitute.

You are encouraged to have frequent interaction with your local pharmacy and Covidien representative to ensure your thallium needs are known.

We are committed to frequent communication when new updates are 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