

November 30, 2010

To: Advisory Committee on the Medical Use of Isotopes  
From: David Switzer, MS and Walter Roberts, MD  
Subject: Written Statement Re: Patient release following iodine-131 therapy

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a written statement with regard to patient release following the administration of therapeutic quantities of iodine-131.

We have provided services for many years for thyroid cancer patients using iodine-131. We have observed that a large number of these patients have been young mothers, who, if released would have had to contend with maintaining separation from their children. A few patients have been incontinent. A few patients have been confined to psychiatric institutions and not compliant with the usual requirements for release had it been feasible. Other instances could be enumerated.

Under good practice there are patients who do indeed qualify for release during their post administration period. At the same time there are many patients whom we may better serve by confinement in minimal care circumstances. Certainly, many studies have been undertaken that confirm the low risk involved for appropriate release of patients and the information generated by these studies should be taken into consideration.

The bottom line is the authorized users, with competent medical physics support when needed, should be able to independently determine when and if it is appropriate to confine a patient and there should be appropriate reimbursement for any and all such instances where confinement is indicated. Guidance provided by the NRC's Guide on radionuclide therapy has been very useful in determining length and need of confinement.