

**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Memorandum

Date: **MAR 28 2016**
From: Under Secretary for Health (10)
Subj: Preferential Procurement of non-High Enriched Uranium-Derived Medical Isotopes
To: Network Directors (10N1-23)

1. The White House Interagency Policy Committee requested the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) preferentially procure medical radioisotopes from non-High Enriched Uranium (HEU) sources. Transportation and storage of HEU increases security and nuclear proliferation risks. Many radioisotope vendors have converted to Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) operations, thus reducing the United States' reliance on foreign sources. In 2014, my office encouraged you to purchase radioisotopes from vendors using LEU sources. I am reminding you of our commitment and encouraging you to expand preferential purchases to the greatest extent practical.
2. As a point of clarification, VA does not purchase uranium. Radioisotope vendors purchase uranium to generate Technetium-99m (Tc-99m). This is the primary radiopharmaceutical used at over 115 VA medical centers. Therefore, the purchase of Tc-99m from radioisotope vendors using LEU sources will not affect your operations.
3. Currently, about 20 percent of VA medical centers purchase Tc-99m from radioisotope vendors using LEU sources. Since 2012, the number of vendors has increased. Each year, vendors should be surveyed for LEU capability via a sources sought request. Our practice must be to solicit for Tc-99m as LEU capability emerges. Please advise all Veterans Integrated Service Network Chief Medical Officers, Quality Management Officers, Chiefs of Staff, and facility nuclear medicine staff of this practice.
4. I have asked our National Radiation Safety Committee to keep track of our progress and work closely with the Office of Science and Technology Policy. For additional information, please contact Mr. Craig Adams, Radiation Control Program Officer, at (501) 257-1571.



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