

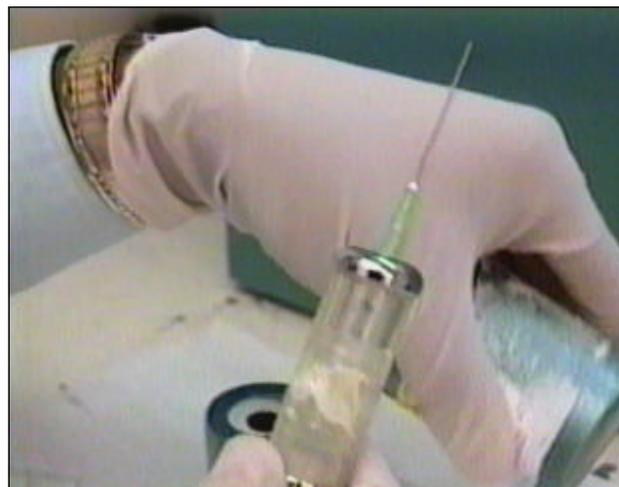
### NEPRI Research Isotopes

The Department of Energy (DOE) has established a new protocol -- *the Nuclear Energy Protocol for Research Isotopes (NEPRI)* -- which will guide the selection of isotopes for development, production, and distribution. This peer-review selection process starts in February 2002 to decide what research isotopes DOE produces in the coming fiscal year, that is, after October 1, 2002.

Because DOE may not be able to provide the full range of isotopes required by the research community, a peer-review process will be applied to determine which isotopes the DOE will produce in a given fiscal year. This process is designed to assure DOE produces those isotopes that will return the most benefit to the research community and general public. These isotopes will be produced so long as sufficient funding commitments are received from customers to cover production costs. No DOE isotope program funds will be expended on the development or production of these isotopes.

The selection process for fiscal year 2003 began in February 2002 with the issuance of a Notice of Program Interest (NOPI). This NOPI polled the research community in order to find out which isotopes are in demand. The NOPI appeared in *FedBizOps* (formerly *Commerce Business Daily*), the *Federal Register*, and on the DOE website ([www.nuclear.gov](http://www.nuclear.gov)). It will also be widely distributed to the research community and sent to current and past customers.

Through the NOPI, isotope researchers were asked to respond to various questions, such as, What isotopes does your research require, how much, and when? Additional requests for information shall relate to specifics of the research projects in



*Injecting medical isotope tracers for diagnostic screening*

which the isotopes would be used, and shall include, but not be necessarily limited to:

- *What organizations are supporting the research and with what resources?*
- *What are the expected outcomes of the research with regard to, for example, medical benefits, savings for patients and the health care system, environmental cleanup, alternative energy sources, materials analyses, and national security?*

DOE will submit the Expressions of Interest to the Isotope Review Advisory Panel (the Panel) for its consideration. This panel will be comprised of five recognized experts: one from the Nuclear Energy Research Advisory Committee (NERAC), one from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), two from research institutions, and one expert from the commercial sector

Based on the merits of the research and other information provided in the Expressions of Interest, the Panel will make available to DOE a

list of research isotopes it recommends DOE produce.

### **What about Commercial Isotopes?**

When DOE submits the Expressions of Interests to the Panel, DOE will also provide the Panel with a list of commercial isotopes produced by DOE. This list is to be reviewed annually so that the Panel can make informed recommendations to DOE with regard to specific commercial isotopes, that is, whether to continue or discontinue production. The Panel may, for example, recommend that DOE discontinue production of an isotope because the private sector produces it. The Panel may at its discretion add new isotopes to the commercial list that are not currently produced by DOE.

The selection of commercial isotopes, however, does not follow the NEPRI peer-review process. No Expressions of Interest need to be filed in order to generate the commercial isotope list.

### **Publication of the Commercial and NEPRI lists of Isotopes**

Once DOE has approved both the commercial and NEPRI lists of isotopes, the lists will be made available to the public by publication in the *Federal Register* and *FedBizOps*. Furthermore, the lists will be sent to the NIH, to professional

organizations for publication, and announced at the annual meetings of selected nuclear medicine or research organizations. The lists will also be posted on the DOE web site.

### **Production of NEPRI Research Isotopes**

The NEPRI list only identifies research isotopes that are eligible for production by DOE. In order to begin the production of a NEPRI isotope, DOE must receive funding commitments from the research community sufficient to cover the cost of production. Commercial customers must also provide funding in advance, but are charged commercial rates for the isotopes they purchase.

Once DOE accumulates funding commitments sufficient to cover the cost of a production run, DOE will schedule the production and notify the researchers (or commercial isotope customers) of a payment schedule. Each production run will take place only after payments are received and all scheduling conflicts (if any) resolved. If insufficient funds are received, the scheduled production run will be cancelled or postponed.

The benefit of the NEPRI research isotope selection process is that, given limited DOE resources, the merits of the isotope-based research are used to guide the selection process and help decide which isotopes are produced.

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