



February 2009

Do You Need Help?

If you have any questions or need to contact us for physics testing, radiation shielding evaluations, or radiation safety training, please call or email us at anytime at the following:

General Diagnostic (Including CR, DR, Shielding and State Regulations):

Jeremy Hulteen
Phone: 218-786-1028
Email: jhulteen@smdc.org

David Eastman
Phone: 218-786-1026
Email: deastman@smdc.org

Mammography & CT:

Steven Nicholas
Phone: 218-786-1025
Email: snicholas@smdc.org

William Duppler
Phone: 218-786-1027
Email: wduppler@smdc.org

Nuclear Medicine & RSO:

Douglas Bennett
Phone: 218-786-1823
Email: dbennett@smdc.org

MRI:

Erik Julsrud
Phone: 218-786-1814
Email: ejulsrud@smdc.org

Happy New Year

We hope that you enjoyed the holidays and already having a great new year. We want to take this opportunity to say thank you for choosing RPC for all your physics needs for 2008 and into 2009. We also have exciting news that we have two new physicists working with RPC. Guy Sherwood has joined our Radiation Therapy department where he has provided exceptional guidance with Cyber Knife and Radiation Oncology. William Duppler recently graduated with a Masters Degree in Medical Physics from the University of Kentucky. William is working closely with Steven Nicholas with CT and Mammography, as well as working in our Therapy department. Whenever you see any of the RPC staff, please say hello and let us know how we can continue to make your job easier. Our doors are always open, and we are only a phone call or email away to answer any questions. Thank you and we look forward to another year working with you and your staff.

Medicare Requires Accreditation by 2012, or No Reimbursements

Yes it's true; you will need accreditation! The Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008 (H.R. 6331) requires that by 2012, providers of advanced diagnostic imaging services, including CT, MR, PET and Nuclear Medicine, must obtain accreditation in order to receive reimbursements. (http://intersocietal.org/iac/news/breaking_MedicareAct.htm)

United Healthcare will also be requiring mandatory accreditation for outpatient imaging sites and providers that bill on a CMS/HICF 1500 or its electronic equivalent. United Healthcare has moved their mandatory accreditation date up to the **forth quarter of 2009** for CT, MRI, PET, Nuclear Medicine, Nuclear Cardiology and Echocardiography.

RPC can help you with the frustrating and confusing process of accreditation submission. We have already worked with multiple facilities to achieve first time accreditation. We acquire and process the test images, and assist with organizing and submitting all physics test images and associated data to assure your equipment passes the accreditation process. Although there are no requirements as to which accreditation process you choose (ACR or IAC), RPC recommends the ACR as the most recognized standard of quality. We already have an ACR CT accreditation phantom, so you don't have to worry about buying one (it is over \$3500).

RPC would be happy to assist you with all your accreditation needs. We recommend starting the accreditation process early to assure RPC has available time to help with the submission. Please contact Steven Nicholas (218-786-1025) or William Duppler (218-786-1027) to schedule your accreditation testing.

We look forward to helping you go through this process.

You can see more details on the ACR accreditation program at <http://www.acr.org/accreditation/computed.aspx>

American College of Radiology (ACR)
www.Acr.org
(800) 770-0145

Intersocietal Accreditation Commission (IAC)
www.Intersocietal.org
(800) 838-2110



CT Testing Requirements:

State regulations require that the CT Dose Index (CTDI) accuracy be tested on all new CT units, after any major repair/upgrade and/or at least every 12 months. Scatter radiation must also be measured and posted for new CT scanners.

This **includes anytime a CT tube is replaced** or any repair that may change the radiation output of the CT unit.

This specific test is often not performed by vendor service engineers as they often do not have the required CTDI Phantom. RPC performs the CTDI accuracy testing as part of all annual CT testing as well as acceptance testing of new installations.

This is a reminder to please contact RPC whenever you install a new CT scanner, new CT tube or have a major repair.

Note: Minnesota facilities are required to have the CTDI accuracy tested (and must pass) within 14 days from installation or repair. Otherwise, the CT unit must be shut down until tested (MDH 4732.1100. Subpart 9) & (4732.0520 Subpart 1.E).

CT Dose Optimization: Make It A Priority

This year RPC has pledged to help our clients optimize the tradeoffs between CT image quality and Dose for pediatric and adult protocols.

First of all we encourage our clients to take the Image Gently pledge:

- to make the image gently message a priority in staff communications this year
- to review the protocol recommendations and, where necessary, implement adjustments to our processes
- to respect and listen to suggestions from every member of the imaging team on ways to ensure changes are made
- to communicate openly with parents a Thank You for committing to the goal to **image gently** when you image children.
Spread the word in your department, practice, hospital or clinic.

Take the pledge at: <http://spr.affiniscape.com/displayemailforms.cfm?emailformnbr=79858>

Secondly we often find suboptimal slice thicknesses employed for routine scans. Great care must be taken in choosing the reconstructed scan widths because there is a tradeoff between thin slices and dose. We would be happy to assist our clients in establishing the optimum protocols.

Minnesota Annual RSO Audit – Reminder & Assistance

We want to remind all Minnesota facilities that the new Minnesota Department of Health regulations (4732.0540) require every facility to perform an internal Annual RSO Audit of your QA Program, including Policies and Procedure Manuals. This is a comprehensive inspection of the entire diagnostic program. Not only must you verify all QC tests were performed, but you must verify all the Policies and Procedures have been updated to include all changes to the new regulations (MDH 4732). Although other states do not currently require a specific RSO Audit, we recommend an annual audit as part of a regular QA Program checkup. This will help to assure all required QC testing is performed and can ease an inspection by the state. If your facility does not currently have an RSO, RPC would be happy to discuss the opportunity for our staff to act as RSO on your behalf. As the RSO, we would perform the Annual RSO Audit, complete with a comprehensive written report and suggestions for correcting any deficiencies. If you already have an RSO, RPC can also perform the Annual RSO Audit on their behalf. If this is an area where you need assistance, please contact us to schedule your RSO Audit or help answer any questions.

This Quarterly Newsletter is provided to all of our clients as a way to help you stay up to date about new and important information. We will provide guidance and suggestions to assist all facilities in maintaining good diagnostic quality while helping to lower patient and staff dose.

Please share this newsletter with all your staff. If you have any questions, feel free to call or email us at any time.

If you do not want to receive this newsletter in the future, please email us at jhulteen@smdc.org to assure we remove you from our mailing list.