



COMMUNICATION FROM THE NMEu EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

Subject: COVID-19 AND THE GLOBAL SUPPLY OF Mo-99 AND OTHER ISOTOPES

Brussels, 24 March 2020

The Security of Supply Working Group (SoS WG) Emergency Response Team (ERT) held a teleconference on 23 March 2020 to discuss the continuing impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on Mo-99 and other isotope production. Despite increasing challenges, the Mo-99 supply chain has not yet experienced any significant disruptions, though all levels of the supply chain remain vigilant and continue to adopt business continuity measures to provide reliable supply.

IRE, Curium, SCK CEN (operator of BR2 reactor), NRG (operator of HFR reactor), and Transrad all report their workforces have not been affected by COVID-19. Belgium organizations as IRE, SCK CEN and Transrad received designation from the Belgian Government as essential services.

IRE urged all parts of the supply chain to be as flexible as possible to change orders at short notice in the case of reduced demand so that there is no unnecessary Mo-99 produced.

The international transport of Mo-99, Mo-99/Tc-99m generators, and other radioisotopes is a serious concern due to reductions and elimination of many commercial passenger flights, competition and cost of cargo and charter options. No serious logistics disruptions were reported over the past week but all participants stated that it is a daily, case-by case challenge to arrange transport. It was reported that within Europe road transport of irradiated targets and radioisotopes continues to function. Curium stated that efforts are underway to try to convince a major European airline which has not carried radioactive materials in recent years to begin such transport at this time.

The ERT received a further communication from the Council on Radionuclides and Radiopharmaceuticals (CORAR) in the U.S. stating that its members have been coordinating in regard to possible shared transportation options for international shipments of medical radioisotopes. These discussions are continuing.

The ERT received written updates from ANSTO and NTP confirming that they have instituted business continuity plans to ensure the availability of key personnel and to maintain production. ANSTO and NTP do not foresee an interruption in the production of Mo-99 and I-131 due to operational or regulatory factors. Both NTP and ANSTO note that the decreasing availability of international flight options are a challenge for shipping radioisotopes. ANSTO has prioritised production of all nuclear medicine products, and as part of this maintaining the operation of the OPAL research reactor. ANSTO is still waiting to hear from its regulator ARPANSA in regard to approval to recommence Mo-99 production for export.

Upon request of some members and after consultation with the EU Observatory, it has been decided to collect a maximum of evidences indicating transport issues to promote effective actions by the appropriate EC service or entity

The ERT will continue to carefully monitor the situation, consult as needed, and Nuclear Medicine Europe will provide regular weekly communication updates.

Bernard Ponsard,
Chairman ERT

Ira Goldman,
Chairman NMEu SoS WG

THE NMEu EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

For the reactors:	Bernard Ponsard, Chairman ERT, SCK CEN
For the Processors:	Frank DeLange, Curium Erich Kollegger and David Acholas, IRE
For the Generators:	Ira Goldman, LMI Nassar Hussein, GE Healthcare
For Transport	Gilles Degauque, Transrad
By invitation:	Marjolijn Droog, NRG
Rapporteur:	Jocelyne Baldasso, NMEu

