



February 11, 2011

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bingaman and Senator Murkowski:

On behalf of the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC), the American College of Cardiology (ACC), and the Society of Nuclear Medicine (SNM), we are writing to express our strong support for your legislation, the American Medical Isotope Production Act of 2011 (S. 99), and to thank you for holding a hearing on this important issue at the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Our organizations, representing more than 60,000 health care providers, urge the committee to take timely action on S. 99 to address the chronic shortages of medical isotopes used in effective detection and evaluation of patients with heart disease and other medical conditions, such as cancer.

In May 2009, the Canadian nuclear reactor that supplies nearly half of the world's demand for medical isotopes shut down indefinitely. The majority of the U.S. market supply of Technetium-99m (Tc-99m), a radioisotope derived from Molybdenum-99 (Mo-99) which is produced by the reactor, has been greatly impacted by the shutdown.

Each year almost 20 million Americans benefit from nuclear medicine tests involving medical isotopes, including 16.7 million procedures using Tc-99m. These studies allow physicians to make diagnoses, determine outcomes and select managements in patients with known or suspected diseases, such as heart disease and cancer, without having to use more invasive and expensive procedures. In the absence of a reliable supply of these isotopes, there is no guarantee that physicians will have the proper medical necessities to perform vital testing and diagnose life-threatening diseases at the earliest possible stage. As millions of cases have shown, patient outcomes and survival rates are greatly increased as a result of early diagnosis, while delayed testing and late diagnosis lead to greater complexity, risks and cost of care.

Having been forced to rely on a foreign supply of Mo-99 and experiencing the enormous downsides of unstable production for many years, the time has come for the U.S. to develop domestic capabilities to produce Molybdenum-99. In 2010 the Obama Administration committed to the achievement of domestic independence in the production of Mo-99. An initiative led by the National Nuclear Security Administration through the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, with

oversight and interagency coordination by the Office of Science and Technology Policy, has the capability to achieve the establishment of a reliable domestic production of Mo-99 within the next seven years.

Your legislation would serve as the basis for the Administration's program and we are committed to working with you towards enactment of S. 99. If our societies can be of assistance, please contact Jenna Wilkes, ASNC Director of Health Policy, at (301) 215-7575 x 207 or jwilkes@asnc.org; Jennifer Brunelle, ACC Associate Director of Legislative Policy, at (202) 375-6477 or jbrunell@acc.org; or Sue Bunning, SNM Director, Health Policy and Regulatory Affairs, at 703-326-1182 or sbunning@snm.org.

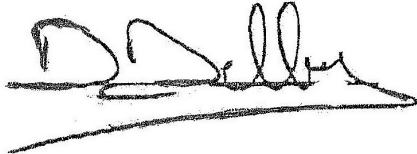
Sincerely,



Leslee J. Shaw, PhD, FASNC
President, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology



Ralph G. Brindis, MD, MPH, FACC
President, American College of Cardiology



Dominique Delbeke, MD, PhD
President, Society of Nuclear Medicine

ASNC is a greater than 4,700 member professional medical society, which provides a variety of continuing medical education programs related to nuclear cardiology and cardiovascular computed tomography, develops standards and guidelines for training and practice, and promotes accreditation and certification within the nuclear cardiology field.

The ACC is a 39,000 member, non-profit professional medical society and teaching institution whose mission is to advocate for quality cardiovascular care—through education, research promotion, development and application of standards and guidelines—and to influence health care policy. For more information, contact the ACC at 202-375-6000.

SNM is an international scientific and medical organization dedicated to raising public awareness about what molecular imaging is and how it can help provide patients with the best health care possible. SNM members specialize in molecular imaging, a vital element of today's medical practice that adds an additional dimension to diagnosis, changing the way common and devastating diseases are understood and treated. SNM's more than 17,000 members set the standard for molecular imaging and nuclear medicine practice by creating guidelines, sharing information through journals and meetings and leading advocacy on key issues that affect molecular imaging and therapy research and practice. For more information, visit <http://www.snm.org>.