

CANADIAN SOCIETY
OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE



SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE
DE MÉDECINE NUCLÉAIRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Stable Supply of Essential Medical Isotopes in Jeopardy!

Ottawa, May 21, 2008 – The Canadian Society of Nuclear Medicine (CSNM) is very disappointed at the announcement of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd (AECL) not to complete the Maple I and II projects, without proposing an alternate medical isotope contingency solution. The CSNM is also concerned with the responses of the Ministers of Natural Resources and Health essentially stating that the supply of essential medical isotopes will not be at risk. We respectfully disagree. We do not understand this decision in light of the recent medical isotope crisis. A crisis Parliament felt was of a significant risk to the health of Canadians to bring forth emergency legislation compelling AECL to continue operations. The CSNM has always maintained, and this was strongly reiterated during the Dec 2007 Chalk River crisis, that there needs to be a long term essential medical isotope backup contingency. We urge AECL and the Canadian Government to reassure Canadians that alternate solutions are in the works, especially in light of how long it takes to build and commission a medical isotope nuclear reactor facility. The Chalk River NRU supplies approximately 80% of essential medical isotopes in Canada and supplies more than 50 % of the worlds needs. The NRU reactor license has been extended to October 2011 and hence the short term supply confirmed barring unexpected events. However, we need to assure the medium and long term supply of essential medical isotopes. The CSNM is not aware of any contingency plans for the medium and long term, and we feel this lack of planning jeopardizes access to essential diagnostic medical services to Canadians.

For more information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

Hélène Samson
Canadian Society of Nuclear Medicine
613-730-6254 (Ottawa)
Our Website: www.csnm-scmn.ca