



July 20, 2009

The Honorable Edward Markey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Markey and Upton:

On behalf of the American College of Cardiology (ACC) and the American Society of Nuclear Cardiology (ASNC), we are writing to applaud you for drafting legislation that addresses the current crisis regarding medical isotopes used in effective detection and evaluation of patients with heart diseases and other medical conditions such as cancer. The ACC and ANSC strongly endorse your bill, *the American Medical Isotope Production Act of 2009*, and believe the legislation is beneficial in restraining the immediate threats arising from the lack of access to a reliable, consistent supply of medical isotopes that thousands of American patients rely on every day.

The ACC is a more than 37,000 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.

ASNC is a greater than 5,000 member professional medical society that represents physicians, scientists and technologists who work in the nuclear cardiology field which represents over 50% of all the nuclear medicine studies performed in the U.S. These studies allow physicians to make diagnoses, determine outcomes and select managements in patients with known or suspected heart disease without having to use more invasive and expensive procedures.

In mid-May, 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 more than 20 million Americans benefit from nuclear medicine tests involving medical isotopes, including Tc-99m. 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.

A continuous reliable supply of medical radioisotopes is essential in order to ensure that patient needs are not compromised. Having been forced to rely on foreign suppliers for our supply of Mo-99 and experience the enormous downsides of unstable production for many years, the ACC and ASNC fully believe that the time has come for the United States to develop domestic capabilities to produce Molybdenum-99.

Again, we thank you for crafting legislation to address this critical issue. As medical societies and members of the medical community, we remain committed to working with you and others in helping ensure that patients receive the most appropriate care during periods of limited supply of medical isotopes, and we strongly urge Congress to move swiftly in funding both short- and long-term solutions to this crisis.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Patrick Hope, ACC Director of Legislative Policy at (202) 375-6631 or via email at [phope@acc.org](mailto:phope@acc.org), or Emily Gardner, ASNC Director of Health Policy, at (301) 215-7575 or via email at [egardner@asnc.org](mailto:egardner@asnc.org).

Sincerely,



Alfred Bove, MD, FACC  
President                      Presiden  
American College of Cardiology



Jennifer H. Mieres, MD, FASNC  
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