

AAPM Advances Best Practices for Patient Safety in X-ray Imaging

Leads international educational efforts through its CARES Committee

ALEXANDRIA, VA, JANUARY 13, 2021 — Since April 2019, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) has championed a critical way to make X-ray imaging safer and more effective by discontinuing the long-standing practice of placing leaded shields over patient gonads.

Today, the National Council on Radiation Protection and Measurements (NCRP) released a statement recommending the discontinuation of routine shielding of patient gonads during X-ray imaging exams and AAPM stands ready to help imaging providers, patients and caregivers to understand and adopt these new best practices – practices that will ensure safer and higher-quality X-ray exams.

Discontinuing the routine shielding of patient gonads is a major shift in how X-ray exams are performed. To foster cohesive change, AAPM created a committee with representatives from the international imaging community. The [CARES](#) committee is an engaged community of stakeholders committed to **Communicating Advances in Radiation Education for Shielding (CARES)**. It [includes members](#) from more than a dozen professional organizations representing medical and health physicists, radiologic technologists, radiologic technologist educators, radiologists and other physicians, and state regulators.

"The NCRP statement is a national consensus document that provides the foundation on which changes in clinical practice and educational requirements can be built," said Sarah McKenney, PhD, DABR, lead medical physicist, Stanford University's Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. "It affirms the collaborative efforts of the AAPM CARES committee, where X-ray imaging stakeholders are working together to identify potential challenges in the implementation of these new best practices and develop practical solutions."

AAPM's [2019 position statement](#) outlines the reasons for discontinuing the routine use of fetal and gonadal shielding in medical imaging. The CARES committee was formed

shortly after adoption of the position statement to provide answers to frequently asked questions for health care professionals and patients.

In 2021, as part of its mission to improve the care of every patient, AAPM will release six continuing education modules developed and approved by the CARES committee. These educational materials will be made freely available to the entire imaging community.

Dr. Donald Frush, professor of radiology at Duke University who served as the chair of the NCRP subcommittee on gonadal shielding, noted, "As the Chair and on behalf of the SC4-11 Committee that prepared the Statement, I am thankful for the ongoing collaboration with and invaluable expertise of the AAPM as we all as an imaging community address this important topic for our medical professionals, our patients and the public."

[About the American Association of Physicists in Medicine \(AAPM\)](#)

AAPM is the premier organization in medical physics, a scientific and professional discipline that uses physics principles to address a wide range of biological and medical needs. The mission of AAPM is to advance medicine through excellence in the science, education, and professional practice of medical physics. Currently, AAPM represents over 9,000 medical physicists in over 96 countries.

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