

The recent passage of Senate Bill 1237 by the California Legislature requires all facilities to report overexposures to patients by CT Scanners effective January 1, 2011. Effective July 2012, all patient reports must contain dose information for the CT scans performed in all facilities by all scanners - regardless of vintage of the scanner. The bill requires accreditation of all CT scanners in the state by January 1, 2013, six months after the other provisions of the bill are effective. The bill requires that the radiation dose be recorded on the scanned image and in a patient's health records, and that radiation overdoses be reported to patients, treating physicians, and the state Department of Public Health (DPH). Among its reporting provisions, SB 1237 will require, for example, that medical facilities report to the DPH whenever the radiation dose for a given scan exceeds 20% of the prescribed dose, or whenever the wrong anatomic area is scanned. A physicist must work with every institution to develop and review their protocols to verify compliance with the reference values used by the accrediting bodies. Standard values of patient doses as calculated by the physicist are acceptable for reporting purposes. At a minimum, standard doses should be determined and reported for pediatric and adult patients for each type of exam (body part scanned). The legislation was introduced in February by State Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima) following a series of serious radiation overdoses that prompted outrage among patients and a raft of lawsuits. Last fall the California Department of Public Health learned that over an 18-month period some 260 patients at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles who underwent CT perfusion scans were exposed to radiation doses eight times higher than normal. Dose levels are established for triggering reporting requirements to the Department of Health Services. All information regarding overdoses except patient information is public.

Educational Objectives:

1. Attendees will be aware of the exposure levels of CT scans that require reporting to the Department of Health Services.
2. Attendees will be aware of the different values of doses displayed on CT scanners and how they relate to each other.
3. Attendees will be aware of the methods acceptable for use in calculating estimated patient doses for CT scans
4. Attendees will be aware of the reporting requirements for physicians of the estimated doses for individual patient scans