

## AAPM Position Statement on Radiation Risks from Medical Imaging Procedures

On December 13 2011 the American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) released their Position Statement on Radiation Risks from Medical Imaging Procedures.

The AAPM is a scientific and professional organization composed of more than 7000 scientists whose clinical practice is dedicated to ensuring accuracy, safety and quality in the use of radiation in medical procedures. By nature of their composition, scope, and collective expertise the AAPM thus is the most authoritative voice in matters of medical radiation, its benefits and its risks.

In their statement, the AAPM finds clear, unequivocal language to confirm, in the unified voice of the most qualified experts, long-held beliefs and individual opinions of many in the medical imaging community.

The AAPM statement acknowledges the As Low As Reasonably Achievable (ALARA) principle, which has guided the practice of medical imaging for years.

Importantly, the statement goes on to speak out against the bias practiced in a deluge of recent articles from sources outside Radiology, but also from within the medical imaging community, to take as proven fact the notion that radiation doses at the level of medical imaging are harmful and to unilaterally focus on risk, neglecting the benefit from imaging.

The North American Society of Cardiovascular Imaging (NASCI) would like to encourage our members to actively disseminate and discuss this important statement within their community, with their referring physicians, and their patients.

### AAPM Statement:

The American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM) acknowledges that medical imaging procedures should be appropriate and conducted at the lowest radiation dose consistent with acquisition of the desired information. Discussion of risks related to radiation dose from medical imaging procedures should be accompanied by acknowledgement of the benefits of the procedures. Risks of medical imaging at effective doses below 50 mSv for single procedures or 100 mSv for multiple procedures over short time periods are too low to be detectable and may be nonexistent. Predictions of hypothetical cancer incidence and deaths in patient populations exposed to such low doses are highly speculative and should be discouraged. These predictions are harmful because they lead to sensationalistic articles in the public media that cause some patients and parents to refuse medical imaging procedures, placing them at substantial risk by not receiving the clinical benefits of the prescribed procedures.

<http://aapm.org/publicgeneral/StatementMedicalImaging.asp>