

PATIENT SAFETY BLOG

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FDA Has New Initiative on Excessive Radiation to Patients

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The scandal about injuries to cancer patients from malpractice in radiation therapy has had one beneficial side effect: the Food and Drug Administration is gaining urgency and attention for its new initiative to reduce unnecessary radiation in diagnostic imaging of patients.

[Here is a link](#) to the FDA's White Paper on its steps to make sure patients get only the dosage of radiation needed, at the right time and in the right way.

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One part of the project is to make it easy for patients to keep track of how much radiation they've had, because accumulated dosing is what causes long-term injuries. The FDA says it is working to develop and disseminate a patient medical imaging record card.²⁶ FDA will make this card available on our website. While ultimately the best way of tracking a patient's history of radiation exposure will be to incorporate it into that patient's paper or electronic medical record, a personal record card will give patients and their caregivers a means, in the short term, of tracking their own medical imaging histories and sharing this information with their physicians. This will help facilitate critical discussions between patients and providers about the best available clinical options.

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