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Doctor who botched prostate cancer brachytherapy procedures at VA hospital sanctioned

A physician who gave nearly 100 veterans with prostate cancer incorrect doses of radiation has been sanctioned by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The errors involved the incorrect placement of iodine-125 seeds in patients to treat prostate cancer.

Out of 116 such brachytherapy procedures performed at the facility between 2002 and 2008, the VA reported that 97 were carried out incorrectly. The NRC investigation found

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that Dr. Gary Kao, a radiation oncologist at the VA Medical Center in Philadelphia, took part in 91 of the 97 incorrect procedures. In several cases, the incorrect doses were caused by Kao having implanted the seeds in nearby organs or surrounding tissue.

As a result, the NRC ruled that Kao cannot take part in agency-related activities without undergoing more training. The NRC also issued a separate order requiring Gregory Desobry, a medical physicist who worked at the same facility, to notify the agency if he accepts employment in that capacity involving NRC-regulated activities within 20 days of beginning such work. Last year, the NRC fined the Philadelphia VA hospital \$227,500 over the incidents.

Source: [Philadelphia Inquirer](#)

To view a copy of the NRC decision, click [here](#).

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