

Office of Radiological Health

X-RAY BULLETIN

ORH-706: Guidance on Healing Arts Screening Programs Reissued Dec. 5, 2018

The **Radiation Protection Regulations** 12VAC5-481-1591 (A) (11) contains a provision that requires any person proposing to conduct a healing arts screening program not to initiate such a program without prior approval of the State Health Commissioner. Screening programs involve the medical evaluation of asymptomatic individuals using an established protocol to detect a specific medical condition or disease. Oftentimes the persons are self-referred. Every medical procedure has a risk associated with it. The use of a screening method that may have a small individual risk, may have an unacceptable risk to a population being screened. For this reason, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) will need to evaluate the appropriateness of a screening method using ionizing radiation in relation to the medical condition being screened. Exposure to radiation may increase the risk of the incidence of cancer and there should be a medical benefit to the patient if there is an intentional exposure to radiation.

In general, the use of an alternate method of conducting a medical evaluation not involving ionizing radiation would be preferred in a screening program. For example a chest X-ray would be an inappropriate method to screen for tuberculosis, when the Tuberculin tine test is the preferred method for a screening program.

Recently VDH's Radiological Health Program and other state radiation control programs have become aware of certain healing arts screening programs, referred to as "wellness screenings" that involve the use of a whole body CT scan. Such screening programs may have little or no medical value.

In addition, VDH is now aware that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has issued the following statement:

"At this time the FDA knows of no data demonstrating that whole-body CT screening is effective in detecting any particular disease early enough for the disease to be managed, treated, or cured and advantageously spare a person at least some of the detriment associated with serious illness or premature death. Any such presumed benefit of whole-body CT screening is currently uncertain, and such benefit may not be great enough to offset the potential harms such screening could cause. Public health agencies and national medical societies-the American College of Radiology, the American College of Cardiology, the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, and the American Heart Association -do not recommend CT screening."

Source FDA web site: <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/ct/>

Contact VDH Radiological Health at (804) 864-8150 for inquires regarding healing art screening programs, and information for submitting an application.

Regulatory Authority: 12VAC5-481-1591
