



Texas Radiation Advisory Board

January 12, 2002

Advisory on Whole Body CT Screening

The Texas Radiation Advisory Board in conjunction with the Bureau of Radiation Control would like to caution the public about the practice of Whole Body CT (computed tomography) Screening Examinations. Under current regulations X-ray examinations must be ordered by a licensed physician unless approval for healing arts screening has been obtained from the Texas Department of Health's Bureau of Radiation Control. The only self-referred screening examinations currently approved are for mammography, bone densitometry for osteoporosis and x-ray exams for coronary heart disease.

Current policy dictates that examinations must receive approval from the Bureau of Radiation Control, based on scientific data, prior to being approved as screening examinations. The FDA, the American College of Radiology, the Society of Thoracic Imaging, and others do not support the use of whole body CT screening of the general public. Whole body CT, however, may be appropriate in certain patients with a specific medical history.

Problems cited with CT Screening include the lack of any specific scientific evidence that CT screening improves medical care for the public or prolongs life. There are also concerns raised over the possibility that unnecessary additional procedures will be required, resulting in an increased monetary cost to the patient as well as a possible increase in morbidity and mortality from these unnecessary follow-up examinations or surgeries. In addition, there is some concern about the relatively high amount of radiation received by patients undergoing the CT screening examinations.

Therefore, until the safety and medical efficacy of the examination is proven, the Texas Radiation Advisory Board and Bureau of Radiation Control will continue to require specific physician orders for this procedure. The TRAB and BRC further wish to encourage the public to discuss with their family physician whether this test may be appropriate for them based on their individual medical history.