

IROC HOUSTON in the News

Medical physicists are likely to have noticed that the IROC HOUSTON was mentioned in one of the articles published recently by the New York Times, under the general heading “The Radiation Boom”. The IROC HOUSTON did not seek this publicity, although we are pleased that the IROC HOUSTON was portrayed accurately as focusing on our mission of reducing the uncertainty in dose delivered to patients on national clinical trials. Instead, the reporter, Walt Bogdanich, was somehow made aware of our posters and presentations at the AAPM annual meeting in Anaheim, and in particular, took note of the experience we reported with our anthropomorphic phantoms. He also found a reference to [TG-119 Article](#) results.

Our colleagues might also be aware that the IROC HOUSTON was mentioned several times during the hearings held before the House Subcommittee on Health in March. Several individuals who were invited to testify on behalf of their professional organizations (Dr. Michael Herman for the AAPM, Dr. Tim Williams for ASTRO) mentioned the IROC HOUSTON as a potential model for external independent audits. In addition, Dr. Michael Hagan, representing the Veterans Administration radiation oncology service, commented on the possible extension of the IROC HOUSTON’s activities beyond the arena of clinical trials.

We would like to remind our colleagues that the mission of the IROC HOUSTON is to support NCI-sponsored cooperative group clinical trials. Our grant from the NCI provides funds for these activities, but does not permit us to conduct auditing or consultative services outside the arena of clinical trials. When we are asked to provide services to non-participant radiation therapy facilities, we direct the requester to one of several fee-for-service operations that can provide similar services. We appreciate your understanding in these situations.