

IOMP - USED EQUIPMENT DONATIONS PROGRAM

Mohammed K. Zaidi

IOMP, Used Equipment Program Manager
9714 Rolke Rd., Houston, TX 77099 USA.
(zaidimk@gmail.com)

Key words: Used equipment, IOMP, AAPM, WHO, donation programs

Abstract: International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP) Used Equipment Donation Program in under the leadership of IOMP's Professional Relations Committee (PRC). We had been shipping used equipment and books and journals to developing countries for the last twenty years. We follow the instructions lead down in the WHO Guidelines for used equipment. The shippers follow the instructions from the Department of Transportation in the USA. The developing countries are served on first come first served basis in general and due care is given on emergency or special needs. We make sure that the used equipment being donated to IOMP is in good condition and we make sure that it meets the need of that country. We also provide guidance on its installation and use. If the developing country needs help in installation or training of their personnel – it can also be arranged. The shipping expenses are required to be paid in advance or arranged by the developing country. Financial help is available in some cases. The donations to IOMP are tax deductible in some cases in the United States. Some countries impose some restrictions such as age of machine and India AERB/BARC issues a NOC for the import of used radiological equipment. By doing this, our aim is to help developing countries in real need for used equipment as they cannot afford to buy new equipment. The experience we had gained in doing this service is presented.

1. Introduction

International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP), website www.iomp.org, established in 1962 with an aim to contribute to the advancement of medical physics in all of its aspects and this must include scientific and professional context. We need to provide medical physics support services to the less privileged countries means developing countries.

All international organizations support this newly established organization and it was also supported by American Association of Physicists in Medicine (AAPM). All active members of the AAPM are members of IOMP. Other sister organizations associated with IOMP are: The American Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ASTRO); international organizations European Federation of Organization for Medical Physics (EFOMP), International Federation of Medical and Biological Engineering (IFMBE), European Society for Therapeutic Radiology and Oncology (ESTRO) and Deutschen Gesellschaft für Medizinische Physik (DGMP).

IOMP started forming medical physics support organizations in developing countries. At present we have some 20,000 members in 79 countries. The member national organizations are located in the following countries: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Emirates, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Lebanon, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malaysia, Mexico, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of China Taiwan, Romania, Russia, Singapore, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe [1].

IOMP's official newsletter, Medical Physics World, Bulletin of the International Organization for Medical Physics, is published twice each year since 1985 and hard copies are distributed to all its 30,000 plus

members. IOMP's first official journal is Physics in Medicine and Biology.

IOMP provided support to other international organization such as World Health Organization (WHO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and International Union against Cancer (UICC). The International Organization for Medical Physics (IOMP) established the International Commission on Medical Physics (ICOMP) which has been approved by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics (IUPAP) as an affiliated commission.

IOMP is governed by elected officers such as President, Vice-president (VP), Secretary-General (SG) and Treasurer. Elections are held every three years and VP, SG and Treasurer are elected. The VP moved to be the President. The Committees are Awards, Education and Training, Professional Relations, and Science. Each Committee has couple of members and an elected Chairman. The Used Equipment Donation Program in under the leadership of IOMP's Professional Relations Committee (PRC).

2. Procedure

We had been shipping used equipment and books and journals to developing countries for the last twenty years. We follow the instructions lead down in the WHO Guidelines for used equipment [2]. The shippers follow the instructions from the Department of Transportation in the USA. The developing countries are served on first come first served basis in general and due care is given on emergency or special needs.

We make sure that the used equipment being donated to IOMP is in good condition and meets the needs of that country. We also provide guidance on its installation and use. If the developing country needs help in installation or training of their personnel – it can also be arranged. The shipping expenses are required to be paid in advance or arranged by the developing country. Some financial help is available in very deserving cases. The donations to IOMP are tax deductible in some cases in the United States of America.

We don't have any warehouse to store used donated equipment neither we pay any expense incurred in warehouse rental. We get the offer from a generous donor and then locate a home. In the case of imaging equipment, we have about a week time to get the machine, locate a suitable home and get it shipped. We do keep a list of organizations requesting for used

equipment. At the time when we had a donation offer, we match the needs and if financial support is available and the party is still there, we make all efforts to ship it. Necessary award letters and other paper work are done to get it through customs of that country.

Some countries impose restrictions such as age of machine etc. etc. India has strict control on the entry of used radiotherapy machines and accelerators and Indian Agency (AERB/BARC) issues a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for the import of used radiological equipment. India needs the assurance from the manufacturers to install and service the machine for the next five years. The former manufacturers (GE) of Co-60 machines have sold it to Varian and Varian takes no responsibility to service old Co-60 machines. So to ship a used Co-60 is out of question even though it is in high demand in developing countries.

2.1 The following used equipment was shipped:

1. Treatment Planning Systems, Brachytherapy station, CAD plan, laser scanners
2. Imaging Systems – x-ray, scintillation camera and ultrasound machines
3. Dose calibrators, Beam analyzers, r- meters, RMI Scanners, Film scanners
4. TLD Readers, Densitometer, block cutters, electrometers
5. Radiotherapy attachments
6. Ambulance

2.2 The used equipments were shipped to following countries:

Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, India, Iran, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, U.A.E., U.S.A.

2.3 Countries donated used equipment:

Canada (3), Germany (1), Nederland (1), Switzerland (1), USA (28) and atleast 20 miscellaneous used equipment and two (2) scintillation cameras, six (6) Co-60 machines and five (5) linear accelerators couldn't be shipped.

2.4 Countries requested for books, journals and Used equipment:

Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Bosnia, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Columbia, Dubie, Egypt, Emirates, Ethiopia, Hongkong, India, Indonesia, Iran, Jamiaca, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Philippines,

Poland, Romania, Russia, Senegal, South Africa, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkey, United States of America, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

2.5 The donors did extra to help developing countries:

Supplied the instrument with connecting cables to meet the hospital needs
Prepared a user's guide to go with the TLD reader
Sent engineer to install the machine and train the users
Most of the donors had arranged free packing.

2.6 Requests for technical support:

We get request like this one: Joint-venture proposal:
"We need support from IOMP to develop a Radiation oncology centre in our country, even if there is any institution or individual who would be interested to donate equipment we can tie up with such institution/individual and give them their name e.g. Joint venture." They need a used cobalt 60, mammography unit and a gamma camera.

2.7 Problems encountered:

Last minute cancellations
Forged payment check
False documentations
Hospital/Institution closed.

3. Conclusion

We had been doing this for the last 20 years and our aim is to help developing countries in real need for used equipment as they cannot afford to buy new equipment. Sometimes, it is hard to identify a matching recipient and shipments to developing countries. All equipment shipped by IOMP reached its destination in perfect condition and cleared through the local customs without any problems.

References

1. Medical Physics World, Bulletin of the International Organization for Medical Physics, Volume 25, No 2, December 2009, Pp-1
2. WHO Guidelines for Healthcare Equipment Donations, March 2000.