Letter to the Editor of New York Times

We are submitting this letter in support of the factual and well-written article (That Lead Apron in the X-Ray Room? You May Not Need It) that appeared on 1/14/20.

Medical x-rays can be life-saving. Modern x-ray examinations use a very small amount of radiation to make pictures (any radiation can cause concern), and because of this, many expert organizations such as the American Association of Physicists in Medicine, American College of Radiology, Image Gently Alliance and the Society for Pediatric Radiology are committed to patient radiation safety and welfare.

Based on current scientific evidence, these organizations now recommend that the current traditional practice, dating back 50 years, of routinely placing lead shields/aprons on patients during x-ray studies will often have no benefit. This can be the case when the shielded area is not included in the region to have an x-ray picture. When included in the x-ray picture, aprons can slightly increase the small overall examination radiation dose. In an attempt to shield the predicted location of the ovaries, aprons will obscure anatomy potentially reducing diagnostic value.

Putting all of this information together, many professional groups now advocate that shielding should not be routinely used. For more information, such as patient/parent requests for shielding, please visit www.aapm.org/cares.

Respectfully submitted by,

Donald P. Frush, MD, FACR.
Professor of Radiology
Stanford University
Medical Director, Operations Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital at Stanford
Chair – Image Gently

Rebecca M. Marsh, PhD.
Associate Professor of Radiology
University of Colorado School of Medicine
Chair – AAPM - CARES Committee

Mahadevappa Mahesh, MS, PhD, FAAPM, FACR, FACMP, FSCCT, FIOMP.
Professor of Radiology, Cardiology and Public Health
Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine
Chief Physicist - Johns Hopkins Hospital
Chair – ACR - Commission on Medical Physics & Board Member
Board Member of AAPM