TUCSON, Ariz., Sept. 10, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Every terrorist attack or nuclear incident anywhere in the world causes much public fear about radiation—and distrust of government reassurance.

Recent concerns relate to leaking water containment vessels at Fukushima. Then there are threats of retaliation if the U.S. strikes Syria. Terrorist groups likely already possess what is needed to make a briefcase nuclear device or enough radioactive material to use in a radiation dispersal device ("dirty bomb").

County emergency management officials may believe that we have an adequate, widespread net of radiation monitors. In fact, we are "upside down" on radiation monitoring , states the Sept ember 2013
Doctors for Disaster Preparedness Newsletter
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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains about 100 fixed sites and also has some 40 portable devices in the RadNet system . While the devices are very costly, they are p rone to failure
and have serious limitations. Most are probably saturated at levels as low as 10 mrad/hr (.01 rad/hr or 0.1 mSv/hr). They could not distinguish between a level that causes no health effects and one that is rapidly lethal. As they sample the air periodically, they could miss fallout particles that settle rapidly.

In the 1990s, the federal government disposed of millions of Geiger counters, dosimeters, and survey meters that it provided to states during the Cold War. These were not replaced. Most current instruments are designed for interdiction (detecting radioactive material), not managing events after a detonation.

'If nuclear terrorism occurs, hundreds of thousands of lives could be needlessly lost, either because of unwarranted panic or inability to measure dangerous doses," states Jane Orient, M.D., president of Physicians for Civil Defense.

"Emergency responders need instruments with a broad enough range, and an understanding of radiation effects at different levels," she states. "Ideally, every fire station should have a robust, affordable fallout monitor on the roof that constantly transmits readings via the internet."

Physicians for Civil Defense distributes information to help to save lives in the event of natural disaster, terrorism, or war.

www.physiciansforcivildefense.org

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