

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2000

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**EXHIBIT SHEDS LIGHT ON X-RAYS AT NATIONAL
MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE**

WASHINGTON, DC – *X is for X-Ray*, an interactive exhibit about the historical, scientific, medical, and popular culture implications of the use of the x-ray, opens Sept. 4, 2000 at the National Museum of Health and Medicine in Washington, DC. The traveling exhibit, which includes hands-on displays, interactive CD viewers, videos and graphics, will be on display through Jan. 1, 2001.

The exhibit profiles the history of the x-ray and the people behind its discovery and development. Exhibit images and interactive components explain how x-rays work. Through the use of a stroboscopic shadow box, visitors can simulate the bone shadows and imprints that led Dr. Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen to discover the x-ray. A model of a Victorian woman can be “scanned” for bones, hairpins and more, imitating fluoroscopy, a technique that provided instantaneous, real-time x-rays.

X is for X-Ray represents the progression of x-ray technology, from obsolete machines and procedures to today’s most advanced and promising techniques in diagnosis, monitoring and treatment. The exhibit provides a glimpse at ailments that have been alleviated with radiation therapy, complete with before and after photographs. Interactive pin models illustrate how computers can pinpoint precise areas for radiation oncology. Visitors can view and diagnose the

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injuries revealed on real x-rays films. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), Ultrasound, and Positron Emission Tomography (PET scan) are exhibited as medical imaging techniques that have emerged from the first simple x-ray.

Since their discovery, x-rays have been mysterious and intriguing, as the exhibit shows in its examination of the x-ray in popular culture. The exhibit features an authentic 1930s shoe-fitting fluoroscope, retrofitted to give the illusion that visitors are x-raying their feet inside their shoes. A video viewer flashes movie clips portraying the prevalent public fears and misconceptions about radiation.

X is for X-Ray was developed by the National Atomic Museum in Albuquerque, NM. It has been displayed at the Boston Science Museum and the Museum of Health & Medical Science in Houston.

The National Museum of Health and Medicine, founded as the Army Medical Museum in 1862 to study and improve medical conditions during the American Civil War, is a component of the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology. Open daily except Christmas from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., the Museum is located at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, 6900 Georgia Avenue and Elder Street, NW, Washington, D.C. Public telephone number is 202-782-2200. Admission is free.

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