



Genesee County radiologist looks back at an accidental discovery

3

Tweet

0

Share

0

Share

0

Pin it

Reddit



By Community Contributor

on November 16, 2010 at 9:16 AM, updated November 16, 2010 at 10:32 AM

Print

Imagine life without X-rays. How difficult would it be for doctors to tell whether an injury is a break or a sprain, let alone tackle even more challenging problems like finding cancer early enough for successful treatment?

All this seems even more remarkable when we ponder the fact that we owe these medical capabilities to a discovery that happened to be a complete accident.

While experimenting with radiation generated by electrical current applied to metal electrodes in a glass vacuum tube, Wilhelm Röntgen, a German physicist, found that a particular type of ray could cast light on a distant screen even after passing through a solid object.

Röntgen coined the term X-ray for his discovery, and it appears that he sensed the medical implications immediately. Shortly after his discovery, he used X-rays to generate an image of the bones in his wife's hand.

"X-ray is used so frequently today that it's easy to take it for granted," said Randy Hicks, M.D., of **Regional Medical Imaging** (RMI), a leading mid-Michigan radiology practice based in Flint, with offices in Davison, Fenton and Grand Blanc.

"But it was a huge discovery. Before the X-ray, it was difficult to have any certainty about what was happening in a patient's body without invasive surgery. If you think of all the imaging procedures performed every day--from radiography to diagnose broken bones to advanced procedures like mammography and CT scans--you realize that modern medicine without the X-ray is unimaginable. Not only would our work as physicians be drastically different: all of our lives would be different. So it's worthwhile to take this anniversary as an opportunity to look back and appreciate the keen scientific insight that enabled Röntgen to understand the implications of his accidental discovery."

Submitted by Regional Medical Imaging

Vaccines in Michigan



20 schools with the worst kindergarten waiver rates

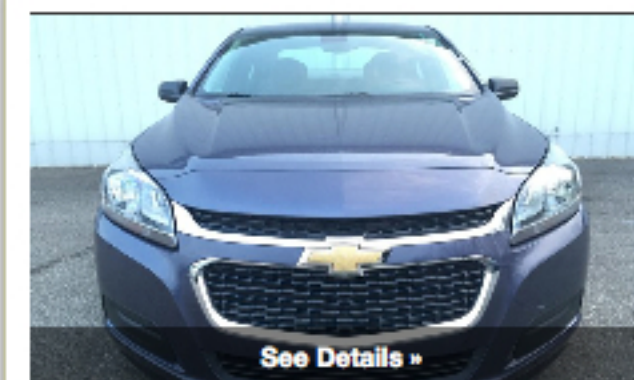
- Editorial: Who will take action to tighten Michigan's too-lenient vaccination law?
- Search updated waiver rate data
- MLive's vaccination investigation

[View all coverage »](#)

Find Local

[Homes for Sale](#) [Apartments](#) [Car Dealers](#) | [Used Cars](#) [Jobs](#) [Businesses](#)

Autos

[SEARCH »](#)

2015 CHEVROLET MALIBU LS LS1

