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SPECIAL SECTION -- LOUISVILLE SITUATION

PM EDITION

EXECUTIVE NEWS DIGEST

This special section contains all press
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during the past 24-hours on the Louisville
situation.

External Communications
and Public Affairs

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THE COURIER-JOURNAL - TUESDAY - FEBRUARY 7, 1974

HOSPITAL TO TEST VINYL CHLORIDE WORKERS FREE

Washington - The cancer scare set off by the deaths of four men at a Louisville plant has led labor officials to arrange for free medical examinations at a New York hospital for any workers exposed to vinyl chloride.

Peter Bonmarito, president of the United Rubber Workers (URW), said that any vinyl chloride worker in the country will be admitted for examination without charge at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

Angelo Oefalo, a vice president of the International Association of Machinists, said the labor unions will pick up the travel costs for workers who travel to the New York hospital.

No accurate figures are available, but it is believed that between 5,000 and 6,500 workers are exposed to vinyl chloride vapors, which have been linked to angiosarcoma, a rare liver cancer that killed four men at the B.F. Goodrich plant in Louisville.

Goodrich first disclosed late last month that the cancer deaths may have been job-related.

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THE LOUISVILLE TIMES

Wednesday Evening, February 6, 1974

FREE MEDICAL EXAMS MADE AVAILABLE TO VINYL CHLORIDE WORKERS

By Ward Sinclair

WASHINGTON -- The cancer scare set off by the deaths of four men at a Louisville plant has led labor officials to arrange for free medical examinations at a New York hospital for any workers exposed to vinyl chloride.

Peter Bommarito, president of the United Rubber Workers (URW), said that any vinyl chloride worker in the industry will be admitted for examination without charge at the Mount Sinai Hospital in New York.

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No accurate figures are available, but it is believed that between 5,000 and 6,500 workers are exposed to vinyl chloride vapors, which have been linked to angiosarcoma, a rare liver cancer that killed four men at the B.F. Goodrich plant in Louisville.

Since Goodrich first disclosed late last month that the cancer deaths may have been job-related, officials have determined that at least four other employees at the Bells Lane plant in Louisville have early stages of liver disease that may be connected with vinyl chloride exposure.

Bommarito's announcement today is part of a broader plan being developed by the industrial union department of the AFL-CIO to develop a system of early diagnosis and treatment of disease induced by the chemical.

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The medical examination program will be supervised by Dr. Irving Selikoff, a noted industrial-hygiene researcher at Mount Sinai. Bommarito said emergency funds from the hospital, the American Cancer Society and the National Institute for Health Sciences will finance the examinations.

The reports out of Louisville, tracing four deaths between 1968 and last December, have led government and private medical officials to conclude that vinyl chloride is the probable cause of what is described as a "new" occupational disease.

Bommarito said that since angiosarcoma was discovered in 1913, only about 50 cases have been reported in worldwide medical literature. On that scale, the Louisville situation is regarded of epidemic proportions.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), an arm of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, has recommended that new interim controls be established at the Goodrich plant in Louisville to protect workers from vinyl chloride exposure.

The chemical is one of a number of substances used in the production of polyvinyl chloride, a plastic used to make phonograph records, pipe, food and drink containers and other industrial products.

The four Louisville deaths and the four other liver-disease cases reported there have occurred in the Bells Lane production unit, which currently employs about 250 workers.

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) enforces a standard of 500 parts of polyvinyl chloride vapors per million parts of air in the Louisville plant and others like it around the country.

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3--THE LOUISVILLE TIMES, FEB. 6/

Goodrich officials contend that they voluntarily strive to meet a self-imposed standard that is 10 times more stringent than the federal requirement.

Sheldon W. Samuels, director of health and safety for the industrial union department, said that the AFL-CIO has initiated a nationwide study in the polyvinyl chloride industry to come up with more medical information.

One aim of the study, Samuels said, will be to force OSHA to lower its industry-wide health standard in the chemical plants. NIOSH, meanwhile, is accelerating a study of its own on the cause-and-effect relationship between the rare liver cancer and vinyl chloride.

The standard now being enforced by OSHA was set in 1968 to protect workers from bone, skin, blood vessel and kidney disease -- before there were indications that angiosarcoma might be another result of exposure to the chemical vapors.

Despite that, Samuels noted that some companies voluntarily have moved to enforce standards that are tougher than OSHA's. Among them, he said, are B.F. Goodrich and the Dow Chemical Co., whose researchers determined in 1961 that a 50-parts-per-million standard was necessary.

The Department of Labor has scheduled a hearing for Feb. 15 in Washington to hear testimony that could lead to a toughening of the federal standard.

And the AFL-CIO will conduct a briefing on Feb. 12 in Cleveland to bring industry and labor representatives up to date on new developments in the situation. The meeting originally was to be held in Akron.

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The Journal, Lorain, Ohio Tuesday, February 5, 1974

Rare Liver Cancer Kills Four

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (UPI) — An official of the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Administration reports that the federal government has declared a rare liver cancer which has taken the lives of four Louisville B. F. Goodrich Co. employees as a new occupational disease. "Right now, the only four known cases of this disease are right here in Louisville, but this thing has tremendous implications nationally and internationally," said Dr. J. Bradford Block, medical consultant for the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1974

Liver Cancer Put On List Of Occupational Diseases

WASHINGTON (AP) — A rare liver cancer fatal to four B.F. Goodrich employees in Louisville, Ky., has been named a new occupational disease by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Pathologists from the National Institutes of Health and the National Cancer Institute confirmed at a day-long meeting Friday that the four died of angiosarcoma of the liver.

It was declared an occupational disease in the belief that it stemmed from exposure to the chemical vinyl chloride.

The Goodrich plant at Louisville uses vinyl chloride to make polyvinyl chloride, a plastic used for phonograph records and some food containers and wrappings.

Dr. Marcus Key, director of NIOSH, organized 35 medical and industry experts at Friday's meeting into task forces for a worldwide study of how the chemical is used and how it affects workers.

"Right now, the only four known cases of this disease are right here in Louisville," said Dr. J. Bradford Block, medical consultant for the Kentucky Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). "But this thing has tremendous im-

plications nationally and internationally."

Block said statistics cited Friday showed 13 plants in the nation make vinyl chloride, and 15 more plants use it such that employees could be exposed.

It was estimated that a total of 6,500 workers in the U.S. plants could have been exposed, "and they make a lot more use of vinyl chloride in Europe," Block said. "I think when people start looking back at medical records in other places we're sure to find more deaths from this particular disease."

The Louisville plant said last week it was investigating the cancer deaths of three men in recent years — a fourth was added later — to see if they were related to their work.

Block said the company tested the blood of 271 workers in the vinyl chloride section last September, and results are due next week of further tests on 55 who showed abnormal liver functions.

Records show at least 29 workers have died of cancer since the plant opened in the 1940s, not an unusually high number, Block stressed. Of the 29, though, 22 worked with vinyl chloride.

Federal standards allow no

more than 500 parts of vinyl chloride per million parts of air. Goodrich officials say their standard is more rigid, 50 parts per million.

Block and his state OSHA staff will work with the company and the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, he said, continuing to check medical records.

Other organizations represented at the Washington meeting will probe the use and effects of the chemical on national and international levels, Block added.

NIOSH will begin a worldwide search of literature for medical data about the chemical and about angiosarcoma of the liver.

The Manufacturing Chemists Association will expand and intensify its research on industrial use of the chemical.

Federal Food and Drug Administration representatives also were at the meeting, Block said, because of the chemical's use in food packaging.

"There's no reason to believe there's any danger to the general public," he said, "but FDA wants to stay informed."

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