



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

BUREAU OF STATE SERVICES

Refer to: SHS-C

February 12, 1958

Dr. Robert A. Kehoe
The Kettering Laboratory
University of Cincinnati
College of Medicine-Eden Avenue
Cincinnati 19, Ohio

Dear Dr. Kehoe:

Your very helpful letter was received today and read with interest. I appreciate the points you brought out and will discuss them briefly.

1. The emphasis given to this proposed program by Dr. Cann (director of our Poison Control Information Center, and a pediatrician) will be on lead poisoning in children. Since no contact will be made with large city health officers except by Dr. Cann, he can emphasize the excellent point you made about the paucity of lead poisoning in adults (other than from occupational causes).

2. Concerning the mention of the finger prick method of blood collection for lead (screening) analysis. This procedure is proposed not to the exclusion of the orthodox method of blood analysis, but merely as an additional investigative or research device. I share, and I am sure Dr. Magnuson shares, your doubt about the accuracy of this method. However, I feel no harm can come from investigating the possibilities potentially inherent in this method if the analyses are not used for diagnosis or as a basis for treatment. Even negative findings would add considerably to our store of knowledge as activities develop, and because of our limited staff they are bound to develop slowly. I will keep in touch with you and I am sure that Dr. Magnuson will be seeing you from time to time.

Please feel free to comment on our activities as you have advice to give. I recognize and respect your long association with this problem.

Sincerely yours,

A. L. Chapman

A. L. Chapman
Assistant Surgeon General
Chief, Division of Special
Health Services

February 6, 1958

Dr. A. L. Chapman
Assistant Surgeon General
Chief, Division of Special Health Services
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Washington 25, D.C.

Reference: SHS-C

Dear Doctor Chapman:

Re: Lead Poisoning

I trust that you will not regard the tardiness of my response to your letter of December 20th as evidence of any lack of interest on my part in furthering the work of our Committee. Other matters have crowded me and have made by delay unavoidable.

I have gone over the copy of the "Plan" and in my view it covers what can reasonably be done to improve the situation. I note that there is no special emphasis on lead poisoning in children in the early pages of the copy, except for the parenthetical notation under the underscored title on the front page. This may or may not be wise, but it is of some significance to recognize that the problem of non-occupational lead poisoning among adults is almost non-existent, and therefore, many physicians would wonder what in the world we are talking about. This matter would be of importance in any public statement that might be issued, and therefore I call attention to it at this time.

One other matter - namely, paragraph 2. in the Recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, took me by surprise. If this relates to analytical work - i.e. determination of lead in a drop or two of blood, I begin by being highly skeptical, since the problem of contamination of such samples will loom so large (unless some special technique is developed) as to render this procedure not only valueless but frankly misleading. I heard no discussion of this - I presume this came up after I left - and I may say that I would have thrown a great deal of cold water on it. Our present problem relates a great deal to the ambiguity of the analytical results which we now obtain from a number of laboratories. Obtaining blood from children is not always easy, but unless the technique is substantially faultless, the results are worse than worthless. I'll be interested in hearing more about this, but I advise going very slowly in this direction.

Sincerely yours,

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ROB