

July 18, 1963

Rex H. Wilson, M.D.
Medical Director
The B.F. Goodrich Company
Akron, Ohio

Re: Lead Problem at Plant
in Marion, Ohio

Dear Rex (and Mac):

Having had words with both of you on this subject, I write to both of you (with the additional idea that your separate files may be involved), in order to call upon and perhaps to contribute to your joint information.

First let me say that the charted information furnished by Mac does not answer the question which I had in mind, largely because of the relative infrequency of the analytical surveys of the men, together with the small numbers of persons involved. These small numbers and the two points per year give insufficient clue to what may have occurred. I do not say this complainingly or critically, but merely state it as a fact. I cannot be very sure, therefore, as to the precise nature of the situation with which we are dealing, but I cannot avoid drawing certain conclusions. However meager the evidence may be in support of them, they appear from the data to be justified.

1. The strippers differ from the non-strippers, with respect to the analytical evidence of their absorption of lead, which is in keeping with expectations based on ordinary observation of their schedule. This fact tends to substantiate the validity of other conclusions based on the analytical evidence.

2. Considering the analytical results on the blood at their face value, the strippers as a group (at least 9 of the 11), at one time or another, but particularly in the period prior to March of 1963, were subjected to some increase in their exposure to lead, as compared to that of any previous period of record. In October or November (or both) of 1962, only three members of this group (Bruce Beers, Tom Rose, and Lauren McNeil) had been found to have some elevation of the lead in their blood. Others joined them later in the winter. It appears, therefore, that something occurred during the autumn and winter months (1962-1963) to bring this about. Apparently only one of the men in this group developed symptoms of illness which were compatible with the diagnosis of mild lead intoxication, but the fact that several of the men reached levels of lead concentration in their blood bespeaking increases in their absorption of lead, tends to exclude any other source than that of the occupation. I believe, therefore, that it is necessary to accept the significance of the occupational hazard as a

KE 0005587

N 7271

Rex H. Wilson, M.D.

- 2 -

July 16, 1963

fact and to set about explaining it. The operations of the plant should be examined thoroughly and critically, in the conviction that they have been productive of a significant degree of exposure to lead. It may be that specific workmen, through their personal habits, have influenced this situation disadvantageously, but there are, I judge, environmental conditions that are potentially dangerous. The fact that the hazard, at worst, is relatively slight, and that the procedures are predominantly safe, only makes it more difficult to define and locate the source or sources of hazard. This, I may say, is a characteristic consequence of doing well in the control of occupational exposure to lead. The nearer one gets to complete success in this matter, the more urgent it is to achieve it. If it turns out that the difficulty lies in the variability of the performance of individual workmen, the problem is still one of environmental control, so as to render the regimen essentially faultless.

This is my opinion, from the evidence, in the full awareness that the latter is incomplete.

Sincerely yours,

Robert A. Kehoe, M. D.

RAK:ss

cc: Mr. W. E. McCormick
Daniel H. Murphy, M.D.

KE 0005588