

carcinogenic fiber are eliminated.

- The report contains recommendations for medical testing procedures including chest X-rays, pulmonary function tests, observation of respiratory and other clinical symptoms. The Group also recommends that sputum cytology be evaluated as a surveillance technique.
- Results of medical examinations should be reported directly to the employee, and aggregate medical information — without individual identifiers — should be reported to an employer's entire workforce.
- Asbestos workers showing respiratory problems should be afforded the opportunity to transfer to jobs where there is no asbestos exposure. They should suffer no cut in pay or benefits to do so. The Group suggests that this program should be similar to the one now enforced by OSHA for lead workers.
- Regulations should protect all workers exposed to asbestos, including those in the construction, shipbuilding, and maritime industries, where high exposures have historically occurred.
- Asbestos product manufacturers should perform air sampling in all possible processes involving their products to determine probable airborne asbestos levels. This information should be passed on to the products' potential users.

Dr. Bingham added the following remarks: For quite some time, a number of us in the public health community, both in and out of government, have expressed concern about the health effects of exposure to asbestos. In recent years, the substance has become the focus of public attention as well; asbestos is now perhaps the foremost symbol of this country's concern about toxic substances in the environment and in the workplace. Considerations of asbestos health effects and regulatory protection have always been complex and controversial. In this light, the current data and solid recommendations to come out of this NIOSH/OSHA project are especially welcome and important.

The report released today is certainly a cause for concern — concern for the

numbers of workers still exposed to dangerous levels of asbestos. But this report, and OSHA's response to it, should also be a cause for hope among American workers everywhere.

It should be a cause for hope because it confirms that occupational health research is not a static science. On the contrary, under Dr. Robbins' direction, NIOSH has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the re-evaluation of all available data with only one thought in mind: the protection of the worker. The current workplace standard governing asbestos exposure was OSHA's first comprehensive health standard. It is based on data that was assembled and analyzed during the mid-sixties, if not the infancy certainly the childhood of occupational health. Much has been learned in the laboratory and in the workplace since then, as this report indicates. In view of what we know now, OSHA's current standard needs major improvements.

The report is cause for hope because, contrary to some of OSHA's critics, the agency's regulations are not carved in stone. They are instead a reflection of the best science available. As science continues to improve, so will OSHA's health standards, and worker protection. The report we are issuing today demands corrective action. We will begin immediately.

We have designated a team within OSHA to begin working on a proposed revision to the present OSHA asbestos standard. We will be developing that proposal pursuant to the OSHA cancer policy announced last January. I can't tell you yet what permissible level will be proposed or whether we will issue an emergency temporary standard or pursue the proposed permanent standard route. But the severity of the threat posed and the very high numbers of workers exposed to the asbestos hazard dictate that we move with all deliberate speed in amending the present standard of 2 million fibers per cubic meter, average over a workday. I am confident that the procedures set down by the cancer policy and the synthesizing effect of the rulemaking procedure will result in a much more protective standard so that we can finally move toward an end to fatal asbestos-related diseases such as lung cancer, asbestosis, and mesothelioma.



For people without brass knuckles, Coverlet knuckle dressings are a real comfort.

Coverlet has the special dressing you need to protect the special parts of the body.

We offer young people pads, dressings, individual shapes and sizes that perfectly conform to the curves of the human body.

Only Coverlet offers you so many special dressings. They provide extra comfort. Extra protection. Yet they cost no more than conventional plastic strips. Ask for them by name, Coverlet.

Coverlet People's First Aid Dressings

BDF

Balensdorf Inc.
P.O. Box 1523
Burlington, Conn. 06913