



October 16, 1997

Ms. Wendy K. Sherman
Manager, Vinyl Chloride Health Committee
Chemical Manufacturers Association
1300 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Ms. Sherman:

Enclosed, as promised, is a copy of the draft GEP's which I helped write with a group of lawyers (Covington & Burling) and several international chemical companies, including ARCO (Robin Leonard, USA), Monsanto (John Jackson, Belgium), and Dow (Louis Bloemen, Netherlands). Although Sandra Tirey is aware of this activity, she perhaps is not aware of the emerging importance of defining a quality standard for industrial epidemiology worldwide. Perhaps CMA would be an important group to join the supporters of such a code of practice (or similar effort). I would be happy to discuss this with you or Sandra further if you wish.

On a related note, I have enclosed a meeting announcement for which I have been serving on the scientific advisory board. The themes for the meeting might be of interest to you. For your information, I have been invited to present a keynote talk on the topic of quality of epidemiological field research. In my mind, quality in the execution of a study goes well beyond any code of practice, and begins to reflect an artistic/aesthetic aspect of epidemiological research.

At some point I also would enjoy speaking with you about an idea I have had which might help to promote quality of industrial epidemiology. Specifically, given that a research team is compliant with the GEP's and prepares a detailed protocol for each study, I would like to see a group initiate voluntary registration of study protocols. An abstract of each protocol, with a tentative time line, could be placed on the web, and the protocols maintained confidentially until results are written up for submission to an appropriate journal. Then, peer reviewers could request a copy of the protocol to use in the proper evaluation of the manuscript. This peer review could take place prior to submission to a journal, and could be performed by an expert team hired for this purpose.

Currently, manuscripts are reviewed by volunteers, and the incentive to do the best possible job is often lacking, often resulting in the publication of very weak science. Then, then, the problem may

