J. D. Burns
Attachment
February 15, 1974

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NIOSH stated that their data shows that there are 10 companies with 14 plants and 1500 workers who produce VCM in the United States. There are also 23 companies with 51 plants and 5000 workers who produce PVC in the United States. NIOSH will be conducting investigations immediately in several plants in which they will be studying medical histories of employees, work practices, atmospheric sampling, ventilation, etc. They will concentrate on those facilities which meet the following criteria with the priority shown:

1. They will study facilities that have been in operation for 15 years or more.

2. Locations that have a significant number of employees.

3. Locations which do not use vinylidine chloride in the process.

4. Locations that are in states which can facilitate rapid morbidity data.

5. Facilities that have an in-house medical program.

The NIOSH studies will be looking at all liver diseases as well as respiratory or any other type of cancer.

They are interested in excluding vinylidine chloride because it was used as a copolymer in the Louisville plant and is somewhat suspect. There is a list of some 50 other chemicals that have been used in Louisville which are also being thoroughly investigated.

It was stated that in the Louisville plant workers now enter the reactors after every third batch for a minor cleaning, and after every sixth batch for a thorough cleaning. The only protective equipment worn by workers are gloves. NIOSH had no information on what the VCM exposure level was in the reactors.

It was stated that the fourth case had now definitely been determined to be angio sarcoma. There is no question about the diagnosis of any of the four cases. One of the men who later died of angio sarcoma had a diagnosis of cirrhosis of the liver in 1963. All four men had a nonalcoholic cirrhosis of the liver. The four other employees in the Louisville plant who have shown an abnormality in the liver function do not show a definite indication of angio sarcoma. It was stated that in one metropolitan survey where there were 16,000 cancers, 133 were liver cancer and 2 of these were diagnosed as angio sarcoma.

The work of Dr. Viola in Italy was discussed. His tests in which rats were exposed to 30,000 ppm VCM 4 hours/day, 5 days/week, for 12 months, resulted in skin and bone tumors in the rats. Dr. Viola will present his results at the OSHA hearing February 15.

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Mr. Rose of NIOSH, who conducted the initial investigation in Louisville, stated that B.F. Goodrich had talked with all of their employees and informed them of the problem. He said that the workers were concerned but not unduly frightened. There was also a high degree of suspicion among the workers that vinylidine chloride was the culprit. It is used as a copolymer at Louisville.

In his closing statement Dr. Key stated that he was hopeful that angio sarcoma will remain a rare occupational disease for the following reasons:

1. Angio sarcoma is a very rare tumor.

2. He was hopeful that in the other plants the polymerization is predominantly done in the open rather than in buildings, which should decrease the exposure.

3. He was hopeful that all of the VCM is driven off before the resin gets to the consumer.

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