

HILL AND KNOWLTON, INC.
Environmental Health Unit Memorandum

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28 UNIONS JOIN AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY IN PROGRAM
TO DEFINE OCCUPATIONAL AND GENERAL CANCER RISKS

Twenty-eight unions and the American Cancer Society are launching a series of far-ranging studies to try to determine the role in cancer risks of occupational exposures in many major industries.

The occupational risk studies will be linked with the resumption of ACS's "million people" epidemiological study that has been used, among things, to associate cigarette smoking with cancer risk. Diet, sleep, and other personal characteristics are being examined in this study.

Now the ACS with the help of Unions and their health and death records of members will be looking for influence of chemical and physical agents resulting from occupational exposures. The new program was announced November 5 in conjunction with the ACS annual meeting in New York.

Dr. Irving J. Selikoff, professor of medicine and director of the Environmental Sciences Laboratory of Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and E. Cuyler Hammond, American Cancer Society vice president for epidemiology and statistics, are co-directors of the investigations. Hammond has run the ACS statistical studies for some 20 years.

Although details of how many studies will be initiated and how they will be conducted were left vague, Selikoff outlined the reasoning behind the program in this way: "There is a suspicion that most cancer comes from environmental sources -- perhaps as much as 95 percent. If this is true, no group is more at risk than working people because of the high concentration of dusts and chemicals in the working environment. We have a responsibility to define the risks so that in cooperation with industry we can find the means to correct the problems."

Selikoff said that the information collected can also be applied to the general population to determine if commonly used industrial materials are posing any public hazard. He noted that management had not been invited to participate in the studies at this point, but hoped that industry would become involved as the work develops.

Hammond said he thought the studies might rule out the possibility of risks for some substances as well as identifying problem areas.

The American Cancer Society will be funding the studies at the rate of \$1 million a year. To provide a control group the Cancer Society is resuming its "cancer prevention" study in which mortality records are maintained on more than one million men and women in 25 states. This will run for five years.

Hammond announced that the National Cancer Institute will help establish priorities for the studies by selecting substances that have induced cancer in laboratory animals and to which the public has some exposure.

A representative of the AFL-CIO headquarters said the unions felt there was a potential hazard to workers anywhere that chemicals are being used and "we don't want to wait 30 years to develop the information needed to set standards."

The following substances were mentioned in the course of discussion: coke, fiber glass, DDT, type metal, carbon black, chromate, lead, uranium, asbestos, materials used in plastic making, talc, benzo-a-pyrene and fertilizers.

An advisory committee will include representatives of the following unions (in alphabetical order):

AFL-CIO Standing Committee on Safety and Occupational Health
Allied and Technical Workers Union
Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America
Compressed Air and Free Air Shaft, Tunnel Foundation, Cassion,
Subway, Cofferdam, Sewer Construction Workers
International Association of Fire Fighters
International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and
Asbestos Workers
International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders,
Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers
International Brotherhood of Painters and Allied Trades of America
International Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulphite and Paper Mill Workers
International Chemical Workers Union
International Longshoremen's Association
International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union
International Printing Pressmen and Assistant's Union of America
International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers
Joint Industry Board of the Painting and Decorating Industry
New York Joint Cloak Board
New York Typographical Union No. 6
Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union
Patrolmen's Benevolent Association
Teamsters Union
Textile Workers Union of America
Tile and Composition Roofers, Damp and Waterproof Workers
Association
United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers
of America
United Hatters, Cap and Millinery Workers International
United Papermakers and Paperworkers
United Rubber, Cork, Linoleum and Plastic Workers of America
United Rubber Workers International Union
United Steelworkers of America

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