



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

DIRECTOR

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To : Members of the Working Group on Lead Contamination
From : John H. Ludwig, Chairman
Subject: PRESS RELEASE ON LEAD STUDIES

In accordance with the agreement at the January 17-18, 1961 meeting of the Working Group (See Item 11, Page 13 of Summary Statement dated January 26, 1961), there is enclosed a copy of a draft of a proposed press release.

Your comments are invited.

John H. Ludwig
John H. Ludwig
Chairman, Working Group
on Lead Contaminants

KE 0004713

PRESS RELEASE ON URBAN LEAD STUDIES

Reflecting the growing recognition that lead is an air contaminant which may have adverse effects on human health, an intensive project for measuring the lead content in the air and in persons specially exposed to lead-contaminated air will get under way early this summer in three U. S. cities, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Cincinnati.

The community studies in Philadelphia and Los Angeles will be conducted by the Air Pollution Division of the U. S. Public Health Service in cooperation with, respectively, the Philadelphia Health Department and the California Department of Public Health. The Cincinnati study will be conducted by the Kettering Laboratory of the University of Cincinnati, supported by funds from the Ethyl Corporation and E. I. duPont de Nemours, Inc.

As agreed upon by a working group representing both public and industrial organizations concerned, two types of studies will be made. First, the air over the three cities at several carefully chosen sites will be sampled and measured for lead contaminants. Second, medical studies will evaluate lead levels in the blood and urine of both average population groups and others, such as garage mechanics and traffic policemen, whose work exposes them to high concentrations of auto exhaust.

In addition, special studies may be made of carbon monoxide and airborne lead in such locations as garages and vehicular tunnels, where they are presumed to be more concentrated.

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These studies are the outgrowth of recommendations made two years ago by an advisory committee on tetraethyl lead to the Surgeon General of the Public Health Service, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The committee suggested that the Public Health Service "in collaboration with the manufacturers of tetraethyl lead....and other appropriate organizations conduct studies to provide more definitive data on levels and trends of atmospheric lead contamination in selected urban areas and of the body burden of lead of selected population groups." The committee had tentatively concluded that a one-third increase (from 3 to 4 cc. per gallon) in the maximum concentration of TEL would not significantly increase the hazard to public health from air pollution, but added that this conclusion might be reconsidered if the proposed urban studies should bring to light significant new data.

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