REPORT OF VISIT TO PASSAIC COUNTY

FROM: Mrs. King and Ann Talamo

DATE: July 26, 1961

PARTICIPANTS: Irving Selikoff, M. D., Jack Ozur, M. D. pathologist, Barnert Memorial Hospital; Miriam Sachs, M. D., Health Officer, Metropolitan Health District; E. Lynn Schall, Coordinator, Occupational Health Program; Mrs. King and Ann Talamo, R.N.s.

PURPOSE: To discuss pulmonary asbestosis study in Passaic County.

MATERIAL: Review of previous field reports.

CONTENT: We met for lunch in the library of the Paterson Clinic. Dr. Selikoff began the discussion by stating that in a hospital as small as Barnert (125 beds) they have had 6 deaths due to pulmonary asbestosis (diagnosis by autopsy) in the last 10 years. Dr. Selikoff has had 21 patients with severe asbestosis; of these 2 have died due to cancer of the lungs; both cases were diagnosed as asbestosis in 1954; in one, lung cancer developed in '58, in the other lung cancer developed in '59. Dr. Selikoff mentioned that Fortune Magazine put out a list of the 500 largest companies (1000-5000 employees) in the United States; 7 of the asbestos companies were located in New Jersey. Dr. Selikoff said there are two things that must be considered - the individual exposure to asbestos and the clinical hazard peculiar to asbestos inhalation which is carcinoma. Dr. Selikoff said that in Great Britain there were 49 deaths due to cancer of the lung in 850 asbestosis patients. Dr. Tom Manousos did a study for PHS on disability applicants with asbestosis; his findings confirmed the Great Britain finding of intraperitoneal cancer in addition to lung cancer.

Dr. Selikoff said that he had met with Dr. Harold Magnuson, Chief, Occupational Health Program, PHS, about the problem. Dr. Magnuson is eager to do some studies in this field. He has little literature available on the subject. Dr. Magnuson recently met with representatives of the asbestos industries, reviewed the literature with them, and gained their support and cooperation in undertaking studies in asbestos exposure. This group recommended that the asbestos manufacturers display leadership and support these projects. As a result, asbestos industries throughout the country are now being polled for their reactions. Dr. Magnuson assured Dr. Selikoff that if the industries did not support these studies, PHS would. Dr. Magnuson or his staff members would be willing to come to New Jersey and help with the planning of the study. One of his staff, Dr. Smith? is now in Europe reviewing the studies done there.

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Dr. Selikoff asked Mr. Schall whether his department would assist in the project. Mr. Schall said that they had no physician so they could not be of help in the medical aspects, however, they would be willing to assist with the engineering aspects.

Dr. Sachs asked Dr. Selikoff how the study was to be designed. This brought up much discussion as to whether asbestos dust was a mechanical or chemical irritant. There is no answer to this, it just is not known. Dr. Sachs mentioned magnesium silicate in talc and the small incidence of talcosis around. Both Dr. Selikoff and Dr. Churg said that although about 25% of most asbestos is magnesium silicate, it may be that this, in combination with the other materials in asbestos, makes it harmful, or it may be another material in the asbestos. Dr. Sachs asked Dr. Selikoff how he intended to proceed. Dr. Selikoff said that he had the following at his disposal (1) Dr. Churg to prepare tissue cultures, (2) pulmonary function laboratories, (3) 2 clinicians - Dr. Coleman Rubin and himself, (4) pathology department. Dr. Selikoff said he would proceed in the following way:

(1) Work out a list of plants in which asbestos is used in any great quantity (these do not have to be confined to Passaic County). Dr. Selikoff needs help on how to do this. Mr. Schall suggested the Industrial Directory.

(2) After this is reviewed, Dr. Selikoff would then do X-ray surveys (NJTHA and SDH participating) in areas of potential exposure.

Dr. Sachs thought it would be difficult to get asbestos industries and labor unions to cooperate. Dr. Selikoff thought this was worth exploring.

Dr. Selikoff stated that basic research is needed - (1) chemical analysis of sputa, (2) pulmonary function pattern which will pick up asbestosis, (3) other laboratory studies.

There was much discussion back and forth between Drs. Sachs and Selikoff. Dr. Selikoff made one point clear - he would appreciate the help of NJTHA and SDH, but he intends to proceed with his project whether he gets help or not. He would like to see an occupational health laboratory at Barnert with the clinical lab the basis for it.

The next steps (1) Mr. Schall will talk to Dr. Kandle, (2) Mr. Schall will set up meeting of this group with Dr. Magnuson, if Dr. Kandle agrees (3) Mr. Schall will prepare list of asbestos plants.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Purpose accomplished.

OBSERVATIONS: Dr. Selikoff, although he has always been enthusiastic about project, has never been so forceful in his statements about doing the project regardless of help - this may be due to the encouragement he got from Dr. Magnuson.

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