Johns-Manville

Internal Correspondence

To File

Date August 1, 1977

From William R. Paul, M.D.

Copies File Paul Kotin, M.D. Helen Young, R.N.

Subject VISIT TO ZELIENOPLE PLANT, JULY 25 THROUGH 28TH, 1977

Helen Young and I made a visit to Zelienople, arrived there the morning of July 25, 1977 for a meeting with Joe Youters and Bob Fredricks. We first discussed the underlying factors behind the recent medical problems derived from the men who discovered they have abnormal x-rays when previously they were not aware of this. (They had not been told by the radiologist or the doctor who does the routine medicals.)

Apparently, several months ago, there was a union group who met at a company near by and some of the members of the union at the Zelienople plant were at this meeting. The lawyer at the meeting explained to them that they should possibly have x-rays taken at other places because they work with hazardous materials. The results of the first group of x-rays taken indicated that four men were found to have lung abnormalities. Eventually, the union sent in the neighborhood of seventy men to the same clinic and no further abnormalities were discovered. These four have since filed suits for workers' compensation and it was as a result of this that all the x-rays were sent to Dr. George W. Wright for reading.

My visit was to discuss with the individual men what we did find in the x-rays, not only the four who had filed suit, but any abnormalities that were found. I explained this to Mr. Fredricks and Mr. Youters and we discussed the strategy of approach. We felt that possibly we should meet with the union leaders and following that meeting counsel and conduct personal interviews with each employee, thereby giving a service which had been neglected. This way we could possibly avert any animosity towards the company, the doctors and the radiologist. We discussed playing down the role of the radiologist in the picture by bringing up the point that the films were of poor quality but not to discuss this any further. This had been my plan since the beginning and I was willing to stick to it. I explained that Dr. Wright had uncovered twenty two abnormal x-rays but these were not necessarily asbestosis or pneumoconiosis but included other diseases. Of the twenty two x-rays, there were possibly twelve with early to moderate changes and of these, about three I would suspect were

5500 01468

JM 807036

Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/11362/1

attributed to asbestos or silica. Whether or not they had any disability was questionable.

I explained to Mr. Fredricks that it is very difficult to just look at an x-ray and make a decision as to whether or not the individual had a disability of his lungs and that I would prefer to look at the man, talk to him and possibly have further testing done. Also, I mentioned that I would like to discuss with the company doctors their attitude towards the problems and possibly sound them out as to what would be a better arrangement for the men to insure that we would get good x-ray readings and in the future avoid running into any problems.

Following this we toured the plant which manufactures brick insulation of various sorts, as well as insulating materials for different ovens and mechanisms. The components include clay and some silica. There is no asbestos used in the plant at this time. They also use a sawdust in the original composition which is burnt out in the making of the brick. This is a very delicate process that requires considerable expertise in turning out the correct type of brick. The number one Besley machine is down but the number two is operating at full tilt. There was a little bad housekeeping but apparently they had been trying to fill excessive orders and as a result there was a little mess in the corridors of the plant. There didn't seem to be any excessive dust in the area. When they unload the clay bins there is some dust raised but this is not excessive. The areas at the firing end where the cristobalite levels were a little elevated seem to be under control now and have improved since the last test done by the Industrial Hygiene Department.

Following this, in the afternoon, we met with the union leaders. I explained my position as fully as possible in the presence of Bob Fredricks, Joe Youkers, Helen Young and an attendant of the plant. There was considerable questioning as to why this had happened and as I said before I used the fact that the x-rays were of poor quality. This disturbed them as they thought the doctor should have retaken the x-rays which I feel should have been done too. They asked me what my intentions were. I explained that I was here to discuss the x-rays with the employees. That there were twenty two cases where we found changes and I told them that they were not necessarily due to occupational dust but I still at some time wanted to tell the employees what we found. I explained that we did not want this situation to arise again and that's what my job was going to be in the future and was why I was here at the present time. They accepted this. Many of them asked

JM 807037

various questions referring to the findings. I explained that the findings were minimal in all cases and that looking at an x-ray was not satisfactory to me. I felt I should talk to the individual, ask them what type of work they have been doing and get a bit of history as to how they felt, what their function was and decide if they needed further testing.

The union questioned me very strongly on the point of the medical itself. They feel there are many complaints from the men, that the doctors were not completing an extensive enough medical. Dr. Raymundo does the majority of the medicals but his wife does some of them too. She is a Phillipine and not too fluent in English. I am unsure whether or not this may have a bearing on the men feeling that the medicals are unsatisfactory. They keep telling me the doctor doesn't tell them anything. I asked if they asked the doctor anything and, of course, the answer was no but they felt that this was not satisfactory. I suggested that the use of slips identifying the different systems of the body, which the doctor could mark negative or positive and send to the employee after the examination, might be of help. They felt that possibly this would be better but they still would like to have the doctor quali the examination by indicating they either were healthy or unhealthy and, if not, what was wrong with them. I really suspect that in alot of the cases the doctor did explain anything he found abnormal and suggested that they be followed by their family physician. In any event, the meeting with the union went very well. There were no harsh words spoken but I could see they were thoroughly upset with what had happened and justifiable so. They seemed to welcome my visit and and we asked for their cooperation in helping us. I told them I would gather together the employees and would speak to them individually or in a group.

The following three days, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, were spent counseling the men from morning to evening. Of the twenty two, I must have seen sixteen. There were some on vacation and, unfortunately, the lawyer for the compensation claims instructed the four employees who had filed claims not to discuss their cases with me unless he was present. As neither one of us would be sworn, I felt that this would be a poor situation for me to get into, in that I would be arguing with the lawyer most of the time and the employees would not get the benefit of my counseling. Possibly the lawyer might use my statements out of context which could be very damaging to any future court cases. Both union and management wished to have these men counseled but nothing could be done so we left it at that.

JM 807038

Published by AsbestosClaims.Law
asbestosclaims.law/library/11362/3

All in all I think I counseled some sixty to seventy individuals, some individually and some in groups. They all seemed to be very understanding and were pleased to see their x-rays and also to talk about them with me. There was one case, a Mr. Williams, who has what Dr. Wright thinks is tuberculous scarring of the upper lobes and I explained this very fully to him and went over his full case which I have in the file. I felt that he should go under further pulmonary function testing and he gladly accepted this. Alot of the employees, of course, discussed their other medical problems with me and tried to get advise on different matters. I tried to avoid this as much as possible and keep it to just pulmonary problems.

While we were there we looked for a location for a medical examination department. There is an excellent office which the foreman uses at the present time that has air conditioning, is well lighted and could have running water facilities for a sink, etc. It is about sixteen by eleven feet and there is a small room off of it which could be used as a waiting room. I think this would make an ideal location. The doctor could come out there for about an hour a week and get through at least four examinations. Being that there are only one hundred fifty hourly employees and maybe thirty some salaried employees, he could very well complete the medical program within the year. The management felt that they could easily convert this room and furnish it with proper equipment. I plan to discuss this again with Drs. Raymundo.

In the morning I visited Dr. Raymundo's wife. I found her to be a very pleasant person but as I said she has a definite difficulty in speaking English. I think she understands reasonably well but whether or not she can get herself across is another thing. She felt that the idea of seeing the men at the plant would be much more beneficial to her in the scheduling and also in the use of her time. I explained to her that the employees were complaining that they were not being told what their medical condition was. She couldn't understand this but possibly she neglects to tell them if everything is okay. If there is a problem that she can detect, I believe she does explain it to them. I also intimated that I would like to have her on contract with Johns-Manville possibly with some kind of small retainer. She didn't understand this but I explained it further to her husband in the afternoon. We had a very good meeting with her even though it was very short because she was very busy.

HSE
JME 807039

In the afternoon we went to see her husband, Dr. Richardo Raymundo. He is a very alert gentleman and I think a very excellent doctor. He certainly was aware of all our problems and he seemed to be very active and interested in keeping up with Johns-Manville. He seemed somewhat upset when I told him that the employees objected to not being told about their medical condition and he went into great detail about how he does tell them. I also discussed with him the possibility of using a short form whereby they would be notified in writing as well as verbally. He accepted this idea and was willing to look into it. I will send these to him in due course. He seemed to jump at the possibility of a contract with a retainer and also at doing medicals at the plant. He felt that this would be better as well. We also discussed the possibility of using Elmwood Hospital for the x-rays, blood test, etc. Apparently, according to him, Elmwood Hospital is very well equiped. It's a one hundred bed hospital with excellent x-ray facilities. The radiologist are all board qualified as far as he knew and seemed to be very competent. He said he would contact them to see if they would be willing to take the x-rays for the company and also discuss whether they could send the x-rays back to Johns-Manville for us to keep at the plant. He said they had good pulmonary function testing units there and were well equiped to handle all emergencies. He also espressed the wish to keep on looking after our accident cases. I was very impressed by him, finding him an alert, able physician and I believe he will do the best for the company in the future.

Bob Fredricks and Joe Youters will be in Denver in early August and possibly we will have a chance to talk with them about the results of our visit. They wanted to know whether or not they could have the x-ray results from Dr. Wright and I stated I would discuss that when I got back to Denver and would let them know.

WRP/plf

JM 807040