



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL  
SAFETY AND HEALTH  
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JUL 19 1974

Mr. A. W. Barnes  
Director, Plastics Division  
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Dear Mr. Barnes:

I am sorry that I was unable to meet with you during your recent visit to NIOSH as I was away on vacation.

Several of the people who did meet with you have conveyed your concern with my statement on British television concerning the transmittal of information from ICI to NIOSH in mid 1973. Because I am particularly concerned about the negative effects of continued debate among those concerned with the unusual cancer experience of workers exposed to vinyl chloride, I feel a clarification of my position and the background to it may help "clear the air".

As you may be aware, during the past two years we in the United States have been bombarded with press reports of unethical and even illegal activities at the highest levels of government, many of which involved attempts to withhold information from the public. And as recently as today, there is a story in the New York Times suggesting that certain activities of our Institute were limited as part of the 1972 presidential campaign. Consequently, we are quite sensitive about such charges or inferences when we know them to be false.

As regards the controversy as to who knew what about angiosarcoma of the liver associated with VC exposures, I have personally concerned myself with tracking down the rumors which began circulating the week of January 22, 1974, that NIOSH had previous knowledge of the problem. And, after thorough review of the facts which convinced me that there was no substance to these rumors, I strongly urged our Director to publicly state that there was no support for such stories. To give you some further background on the atmosphere here during that time, I should note that unfortunately a great part of the news coverage of the New York Academy meeting had to do with the possibility that scientific evidence of great import had been withheld. And as Professor Maltoni

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can assure you, it was a very disconcerting experience. Furthermore, the featured speaker at the banquet session, a high-level spokesman for the American labor movement, chose as his theme the need to end the "secret" studies conducted by industry and government to the exclusion of labor. More specifically, he charged that NIOSH had knowledge of the angiosarcoma problem long before the S.F. Goodrich report of January 22, 1974, and had purposely kept this information secret. Immediately following the speech, I challenged the speech writer to identify the individual who had transmitted this information to NIOSH and the person to whom it had been transmitted. I was told that Professor Maltoni had informed the labor people that he had transmitted the information but refused to identify his NIOSH contact. For your information I am enclosing a copy of correspondence between Dr. Key and Professor Maltoni on this question.

Before I address the question of the Chemical Industries Association (CIA) statement, allow me to say a few words about why all this nonsense makes me so furious. I have already mentioned the general atmosphere in this country and how disturbing it is to those in government who are honestly trying to serve the public. There is additionally the matter of questioning the integrity of our public health officials and scientists who are deeply dedicated to protecting the health of the worker. You may question their expertise or knowledge of a subject. You may question their logic for drawing conclusions about the inter-relationships of exposure and disease. But you dare not, without supporting evidence, question their integrity unless you want to scrap with me. I might point out that I am of Welsh coal-mining stock.

More seriously though, following the New York meeting, Dr. Duffield visited us at Rockville and sat in on a discussion of staff notes from the Manufacturing Chemists Association (MCA) meeting of July 17, 1973. His recollection, without reference to his own notes, were as our staff reported. It, therefore, came as quite a shock to read the press statement released by the CIA shortly thereafter which stated: ". . . and in particular, American industry and government (NIOSH) were told." I could only infer that what we were told was described in the preceding paragraph where it was noted that Maltoni had reported a very rare form of liver cancer in rats. As best I could determine, no representative of NIOSH was ever made aware of these findings prior to January 22, 1974, and even on that date, they were transmitted with the stipulation that they be kept confidential. I interpreted the CIA press release to be intentionally misleading since it was at complete variance with the facts as I knew them. Shortly after the CIA release, the Manufacturing Chemists Association released its chronology of events which also inferred that NIOSH had been given the same information. I was, to say the least, very upset. Therefore, when the British television interviewer asked my reaction to the CIA statement that NIOSH had been informed, I responded that I would

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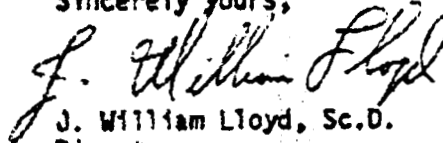
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characterize those making such statements as damned liars. I should point out that I made no reference to specific individuals and I qualified my statement by offering to apologize to anyone who could prove me incorrect.

If I understand correctly the reports of your recent conversation with NIOSH staff, we may be at an impasse on this since you suggest that our disagreement may be due to honest differences in interpretation of these statements. I am, therefore, willing to assume your good faith in this matter and am offering my apology to you for any negative reflection my statement may have had on you personally. Furthermore, I should like to state that my response to the CIA statement should not be interpreted as casting aspersions on ICI, nor as implying untruths on the part of ICI.

Finally, I should like to point out that I and many of my colleagues are convinced that the health and welfare of the worker can best be advanced only by the joint efforts of industry, labor and government agencies. To that end I have actively campaigned to effect such efforts in this country and am a founding member of our Society for Occupational and Environmental Health which was recently organized for that purpose. It is, therefore, rather disconcerting to me that I have become involved in such a controversy among the three parties. I hope that these are the growing pains to be expected in a young child.

Sincerely yours,



J. William Lloyd, Sc.D.  
Director  
Office of Occupational Health  
Surveillance and Biometrics

Enclosure

cc:  
Allan Segal

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Dear Doctor Key,

I have just today received your letter of June 28th, with enclosures. As a scientist, I find it difficult to understand the turn of events.

Since vinyl chloride has been an important sector of the work of our Institute in the last few years, I am of course aware of the facts and of the sequence in which they occurred. Moreover, I am profoundly concerned that the sad story of VC carcinogenicity should indicate the need for predictive experimental bioassays on any new and widespread compounds, as well as on any compounds which are already being produced, but whose effects are not yet known: in my opinion, this is the only effective way of protecting both the workers involved, and human society in general.

In the light of the correspondence between yourself and the Editor of "American Medical News", it seems to me that any further statement on my part would be superfluous. In fact, the value of predictive testing is substantiated by many of the facts in Mr. Rowlands' letter.

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Dr. MARCUS K. KEY

Bologna, 11/7/74  
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As far as your specific enquiry is concerned, may I point out that I never stated that NIOSH knew of experimental evidence because a representative came to Bologna on any occasion. It appears that there may have been some misapprehension arising from confusion between information received, and an actual visit to Bologna. I am sorry if my limited knowledge of the English language has given rise to any misunderstanding on this point.

In relation to the reference in Mr. Rowlands' letter to the report by MCA that it had begun to sponsor VC-PVC research in Europe in March 1972, I wish to avoid any possible confusion by making it clear that MCA has at no time promoted or supported our own research.

I hope that you will agree that my reply to your letter has sufficiently clarified the position,

*My best regards*

*C. Maltoni*  
(Prof. Cesare Maltoni)

CM/mlr

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