

**DOE FORMER BERYLLIUM WORKERS
MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM
November 24, 1998**

The Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Occupational Medicine and Medical Surveillance (EH-61) is requesting your assistance in announcing and coordinating the expansion of the Former Beryllium Workers Medical Surveillance Program. Responsive to requirements of 42 USC Sec 7274i "Program to Monitor Department of Energy Workers Exposed to Hazardous and Radioactive Substances," this program will offer medical examinations to former employees (retired and separated) who are at risk for chronic beryllium disease (CBD) due to their work at DOE. Pilot programs were established in 1991 at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site and the Oak Ridge Y-12 Plant and also in 1998 at Hanford Environmental Health Foundation, Los Alamos National Laboratory, and East Tennessee Technology Park. The current 5 pilots under the program will be expanded to include 15 additional sites that have reported having beryllium operations.

The program will be funded by EH-61 and operated by the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education (ORISE). The ORISE project manager is Dr. Donna Cragle and she can be reached on (423) 576-2866. The referring physician for this project is F. Joseph Furman, M.D., and he can be reached on (303) 966-2405.

This program potentially affects the site management, operating organizations and labor representative, and mailings of informational and out-reach materials may create congressional and media interest.

In support of this activity, my office requests your assistance in accomplishing the following actions:

- o Distribution of the attached program plan to the management, labor, and public and congressional affairs organizations;
- o Placement of the program plan and periodic reports on the project in your local reading rooms; and
- o Identifying a point of contact in your organization who will be cognizant of the project, help arrange meetings, and disseminate information. Please have the point of contact identify themselves to Paul Wambach, EH-61. He can be reached on (301) 903-7373, facsimile (301) 903-5072, or by e-mail at *Paul.Wambach@eh.doe.gov*.

There will be some nominal costs to the site associated with meetings, records access, and dissemination of information. Funds have been allocated to support the construction of rosters of former beryllium workers. At some sites, this might be most efficiently accomplished by operating contractor personnel under the direction of the site medical director. Similarly, medical examinations of former employees still living in the area might be most easily provided by the site clinic. These costs can be reimbursed through work authorizations or memorandums of procurement.

In addition to the expansion of the beryllium program, over the next several months we will also begin preliminary plans to expand our Former Radiation Workers Medical Surveillance Program to additional sites within the DOE complex. This expansion will also require your support and cooperation, and we look forward to your assistance in this important effort. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Paul Wambach as mentioned above.

George R. Gebus, M.D., M.P.H.
Director
Office of Occupational Medicine
and Medical Surveillance

Attachment

cc: Penelope A. Adams, PA-20
Nicholas A. Chumbris, CI-40

Distribution List

Larry D. Kirkman, Acting Assistant Manager, Office of Technical Management and Operations, AL

Michael J. Flannigan, Director, Safety and Technical Services, CH

James J. Mangeno, Director, Nuclear Technology Division, NE-60

James S. Hirahara, Assistant Manager for Site Management, OAK

Nathaniel Brown, Jr., Assistant Manager for Compliance Support OH

Robert W. Poe, Assistant Manager for Environment, Safety and Health OR

David C. Lowe, Assistant Manager for Engineering, RF

Paul Kruger, Director, Office of Environment, Safety and Health, RL

Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Program Plan

I. Work Plan

A. Identification

A roster of beryllium workers will be established at all current DOE facilities that have conducted beryllium operations. The roster will include former beryllium workers who have retired or separated from employment. These rosters will be compiled from searches of medical, personnel, and other relevant record systems maintained at the facilities. Local unions may also be asked to provide lists of workers who were potentially exposed to beryllium. Rosters should include available beryllium work history data consisting of job title, location, organization, and duration of work with beryllium. The former worker phase II projects at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Hanford, the East Tennessee Environmental Technology Park (K-25), and among Oak Ridge construction workers will help establish rosters of former beryllium workers.

B. Notification of Workers

Retired and separated workers on beryllium rosters will be notified of their eligibility to participate in the program. If records are incomplete, retired and separated workers not listed on the rosters will also be given an opportunity to self-identify as former beryllium workers. Individual contact and general announcements (through newspapers, etc.) will be utilized to inform former workers of the program and the fact that they can self-identify as a former beryllium worker. Local and national labor unions will also be asked to help in the notification procedures, as many retired and former workers may have retained their union membership. Upon verification that self-identified workers were exposed to beryllium by searches of relevant records, these workers will be added to the roster.

C. Informed Consent

Participants will be asked to sign a consent form prior to their screening examination. The form and information on the risks and benefits of participating in the program will be mailed at the time an appointment for screening examination is made. Participants will be given an opportunity to have their questions answered prior to signing the form. If additional medical examinations are recommended based on screening results, the risks and benefits of these examinations will be explained by the referring physician at the time they are recommended.

D. Standards for Screening

A blood sample will be obtained from participants for the Be-LPT. A standardized questionnaire, based on the American Thoracic Society Epidemiology Standardization Project format questionnaire on respiratory symptoms will be used to elicit signs or symptoms of respiratory disease. Chest radiographs may be offered if indicated by responses to questions on respiratory symptoms.

E. Diagnostic Medical Examinations

Individuals found to have either a positive Be-LPT or signs and symptoms of respiratory disease consistent with CBD will be referred to a pulmonary medicine clinic for diagnostic examinations to determine whether CBD is present.

F. Periodic Medical Monitoring

In general, former beryllium workers will be offered periodic examinations every 3 years. The predictive value of Be-LPT and other components of the screening medical examination will be calculated, and recommendations for a continuing to offer periodic medical monitoring to sub-groups will be made. The recommended periodicity may vary for groups of workers who are identified as having an especially high or especially low prevalence of the disease.

G. Medical Care

Medical care will be provided by community physicians. Costs will be covered by insurance to the degree feasible. The cost of recommended medical care that is not covered by insurance will be covered through EH project funds. Coordination with site benefits and employee assistance departments is needed to help assure participants understand their eligibility for benefits and receive the medical care recommended for them.

H. Epidemiologic Surveillance

As part of the DOE Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Program, a beryllium worker registry will be created for analysis and follow-up. Information on CBD incidence rates will be used to identify high-risk operations where additional primary preventative actions are needed. Data provided by facilities in the program will also be included in the Comprehensive Epidemiologic Data Resource (CEDR), thus enhancing the accessibility of the data to the wider scientific community.

II. Schedule

- A. The DOE Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Program will take at least 4 years to accomplish at each site. The program will operate concurrently at all sites. It is estimated that between 5,000 and 10,000 former employees will require testing. The following is a schedule that assumes all sites are operating concurrently and funding levels are adequate.
- B. Fiscal Year (FY) 1999
 - 1. Continue to provide screening tests to former employees enrolled in beryllium medical surveillance programs at Oak Ridge and Rocky Flats.
 - 2. Search plant records for all workers who have ever been identified as beryllium workers. Identify local unions that may have useful records.
 - 3. Advertise for medical services.
 - 4. Implement the communication plan.
 - 5. Medical follow-up of workers determined to have indications of CBD from screening examinations.
 - 6. Establish a plan for counseling and assisting employees in obtaining medical benefits.
- C. FY 2000
 - 1. Determine the most recent current mailing address of retired and separated beryllium workers. Vital status and current mailing addresses will be obtained, either from benefit programs for retirees or through commercial search services for separated workers.
 - 2. Continue testing currently enrolled former employees.
 - 3. Begin notification and testing of separated and retired beryllium workers from additional sites.
 - 4. Medical follow-up of workers determined to have indications of CBD from screening examinations.

D. FY 2001

1. Continue screening of retired and separated beryllium workers.
2. Medical follow-up of workers determined to have indications of CBD from screening examinations.

E. FY 2002

1. Finish screening and follow-up medical examinations of former employees.
2. Initiate periodic medical surveillance of former employees at risk for chronic beryllium disease.
3. If exposure monitoring data is available, conduct exposure assessment for CBD cases.

III. Authorities and Responsibilities

A. The Assistant Secretary for Environment, Safety and Health:

1. coordinates with DOE elements, contractors and labor representatives the planning, direction, and scheduling of the Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Program;
2. establishes contracts for the Be-LPT and diagnostic work-up examinations of former employees;
3. funds all costs associated with the provision of medical examinations and uncovered medical care to former employees; and
4. analyzes the results of the program and recommends a continuing medical surveillance program for current employees.

B. Operations, Area, or Site Offices:

1. provide for employee participation in joint labor-management committees to plan, direct, and coordinate implementation of site Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Programs (can be subgroup of local Tripartite Council or other established safety and health committee); and
2. assist in the day-to-day oversight of the administration of the local program.

- C. Management and Operating or Management and Integrating Contractors:
1. either assist or perform record searches to identify former beryllium workers;
 2. support participation of labor unions or other employee representatives in:
 - a. program planning;
 - b. the location and notification of former employees; and
 - c. the dissemination of the results of the program and health risk information.

**DOE Sites With Reported Beryllium Operations
(20 sites and facilities)**

Albuquerque Operations Office (6)

Inhalation Toxicology Research Institute (ER)
Kansas City Plant (DP)
Los Alamos National Laboratory (DP)
Pantex Plant (DP)
Pinellas Plant (EM)
Sandia National Laboratories (DP)

Chicago Operations Office (3)

Ames Laboratory (ER)
Argonne National Laboratory (ER)
Fermi National Accelerator (ER)

Oakland Operations Office (3)

Energy Technology Engineering Center (EM)
Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory (ER)
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (DP)

Oak Ridge Operations Office (3)

Oak Ridge Gaseous Diffusion Plant (EM)
Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ER)
Y-12 Plant (DP)

Ohio Field Office (1)

Mound Facility (DP)

Richland Operations Office (2)

Westinghouse Hanford Company and Predecessors (EM)
Pacific Northwest Laboratory (ER)

Rocky Flats Office (1)

Rocky Flats Plant (EM)

Schenectady Naval Reactors Office (1)

Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory (NE)

Communication Plan

The Overall Strategy

Communication will be an ongoing process as the program progresses. At each step and at each site, the objective is to inform the communities and groups that might be affected by the program. Major milestones may warrant a Headquarters' press release, but in general, most activities will take place at the sites. The approach will be to keep the local and national press informed of planned activities and to target more detailed information to groups that might be affected by those activities.

The Message

This program is aimed at determining the extent to which DOE operations have caused chronic beryllium disease and to offer both current and former employees state-of-the-art medical examinations for the early identification of the disease. It is a Department-wide effort to fulfill its mission of identifying the health effects of DOE operations and to intervene to minimize those effects. The principal message is that the Department is meeting its responsibility to openly analyze and acknowledge the health effects of its operations and to enable workers to take action, if necessary, to seek proper treatment and the compensation to which they are entitled.

A related general issue is the priority the Department places on protecting the health and safety of workers.

Targeted Audience

- o Members of Congress. The Former Beryllium Worker Medical Surveillance Program will be an element of the Office of Health Studies budget submission. Congressional oversight committees have been informed of pilot programs and the Office of Health Studies plans for expansion. Members representing districts with DOE sites should be notified prior to site specific announcements of expansion of the program.
- o The Workforce. An extensive health risk communication effort is required to inform employees of the risks associated with beryllium and the steps they can take to protect their health. An existing safety and health training special interest group is being used to encourage collaborative development and dissemination of effective materials for employees. A graded approach will be used depending on the degree of an employees potential for exposure.
- o General Public. At some sites, there will be large mailings to former employees to notify them of the program and to offer a free medical examination. This step would generally require a local press release.

- o State, local and/or tribal governments would not be directly affected by this program. Notification would be limited to local press releases.
- o Energy and trade associations. The program envisions cooperation and participation by both national and local labor unions. Communication with labor unions will be initiated through national and local Tripartite Safety and Health Councils. Ongoing communication will be accomplished through beryllium committees endorsed by the Tripartite Councils. Local medical societies should also be approached prior to initiation of a medical screening program for former employees. Local medical practitioners may be affected if their patients seek advice from them about program announcements. Generalizable information generated by the program will be submitted for publication in peer reviewed journals.