

Dragon, Karen E. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)

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Sent: Wednesday, August 15, 2007 12:45 PM
To: NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)
Cc: Pinkerton, Lynne (CDC/NIOSH/DSHEFS)
Subject: Recommendation about IBM Cancer Study

To: niocindocket@cdc.gov
Subject: Recommendations concerning IBM Cancer Study
From: Ralph M. Garruto, PhD

Comments on the Assessment of the Feasibility of a Study of Cancer Among Former Employees of the
IBM Facility in Endicott, New York

1. Follow-up interviews with former IBM employees who developed cancer (or with their spouses or first degree relatives) back to 1965 should take place to obtain missing data or to clarify inconsistent data from the IBM database records. The NIOSH Feasibility Report summarized these problems (including missing or inconsistent date of hire, separation date, sex, race, date of birth and work history) in Appendix 1, Table 1 of the Report.
2. It would seem imperative to interview former IBM employees regarding issues of exposure, the chemicals used, and the Departments and Categories of employees impacted.
3. A follow-up nested case-control study comparing former IBM workers with cancer to a group of workers without cancer should definitely be done as recommended by NIOSH in their Feasibility Assessment. This will also help clear up issues regarding medical histories, lifestyle choices including smoking, and prior employment questions at IBM and elsewhere.
4. If it is found that an increased risk of cancers in IBM workers appears to be workplace exposure related, then studies in Community Neighborhoods should be initiated. Since environmental exposures to toxic chemicals from IBM activities and spills have been reported, it is important to determine if there is an excess of birth defects as well as childhood and adult cancers in impacted Neighborhoods.

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