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IN REPLY
REFER TO: H

July 29, 1954	
US DOE ARCHIVES 326 US ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION	
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DIVISION OF BIOLOGY & MEDICINE	
Box	3365
Folder	MHS2 Beryllium

Dr. Charles Dunham
Division of Biology and Medicine
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Chuck:

As I am sure you are aware, Dr. Joseph Shilen, Director of the Bureau of Industrial Hygiene of the Pennsylvania Department of Health, has recently been stirring up considerable controversy with his opinions on the hazards of work with beryllium. His most recent production is a paper in the July issue of Industrial Medicine and Surgery. It is my feeling that this paper not only represents a type of intellectual dishonesty which should be exposed for what it is, but also I feel that it is a very dangerous paper. It will either lull certain manufacturers into a false sense of security or it may cause some of them who, in many cases, are subcontractors to the AEC to feel that we don't know what we are talking about if we insist on rigid precautions.

For some time now Harriet Hardy has been compiling a case registry of beryllium poisoning cases. This work of hers has, I believe, received the financial support as well as the professional blessing of the Division of Biology and Medicine. I happen to know that her list of cases contains one or more which came from the Beryllium Corporation, the concern which was given the whitewash treatment in Shilen's paper. I feel that Harriet has at hand all of the material necessary to provide a rather complete refutation of everything Shilen says, and I believe that steps should be taken immediately to bring this matter out into the open.

I confess I am not certain as to what I regard as the best method for doing this. If Harriet publishes this material under her own name she probably stands a very good chance of being sued. Obviously, she must be protected from the effects of such a possibility. I wonder if it might be possible to have the U. S. Public Health Service come out with some sort of official statement or bulletin which would simply say that in the opinion of the USPHS beryllium must be regarded as a hazardous material until and unless it can finally be proven innocent.

This, of course, would represent a rather peculiar reversal on the part of the Public Health Service. As far as I know, their only previous word on the subject was the pamphlet issued about ten years ago which was written by Lawrence Fairhall. In this pamphlet he attempted to give beryllium a clean bill of health and he stubbornly stuck to his opinion in the face of a steadily

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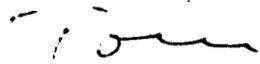
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increasing volume of evidence to the contrary. I feel quite certain that Seward Miller now appreciates the fallacy of Fairhall's work, and they might like to take this opportunity to get back on the right side of the fence. Fairhall is no longer employed by the U. S. Public Health Service.

DOE ARCHIVES

As you may gather, I feel rather strongly on this subject as do a number of others and I would like to see some definite action taken.

Very sincerely yours,


THOMAS L. SHIPMAN, M. D.,
Health Division Leader

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