

RLHTS95-0006
Radiation Incident



UNITED STATES
ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION 727351
RICHLAND OPERATIONS OFFICE
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12/30/75

Oscar J. Bennett, Director
Contracts and Procurement Division

CONTRACTS AT(45-1) - 1780 and 1781, IRRADIATION OF PRISON VOLUNTEERS

As I discussed briefly with you, I asked Clyde Fitz to brief me on the situation concerning work performed on Contract AT(45-1) 1780 by Pacific Northwest Research Foundation and specifically meetings recently held at the Oregon State Penitentiary. A copy of counsel's correspondence to headquarters is attached which covers the problem area and includes recommendations for a follow-up program for all the men who were irradiated under the program, including the offer of medical examinations at intervals of about two or three years. I discussed with Clyde my concern that the recommendations address themselves only to the program conducted by PNRF at Oregon State Penitentiary and did not cover the program conducted by the University of Washington at Washington State Penitentiary. Apparently counsel was not aware of this latter program.

I contacted C. Alvin Paulsen who was the principal investigator under the University of Washington sponsored program. He was aware of the problem at OSP and indicated that he had been contacted by the National Inquirer but refused to grant the newspaper an interview. Dr. Paulsen's position concerning any follow-up program is briefly as follows: Dr. Paulsen indicated that he is covered by malpractice insurance which would apply in the event of any litigation and that he believes that a follow-up program is not indicated for medical reasons. Dr. Paulsen stated that from the standpoint of the patients best interest he believes a follow-up program would be harmful since most of the prisoners wish to disassociate themselves with the prison experience. Further he questions whether use of the Justice Department to follow or track down former inmates would violate their civil rights. He feels very strongly about the doctor-patient relationship and wishes to be consulted by ERDA before any program is initiated. I asked Dr. Paulsen if he had been contacted by any of the prisoners involved. He indicated that several of the prisoners have contacted him to inquire whether they could use his name as reference on job applications; however, he has had no contacts from

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prisoners who are concerned over their participation in the program.

I called Elmer Harvey, Division of Biomedical & Environmental Research, and asked him if any action was required at this point by RL regarding this matter. Dr. Harvey indicated that DBER would take no action until it receives a proposal, if any, from PNRF and/or the University of Washington. Dr. Harvey indicated that DBER's position is to wait and see what develops. I discussed with him very briefly Dr. Paulsen's remarks and the fact that the contracts specifically stated that the contractor was responsible for the conduct of the work.

Because of the extensive experience that the University of Washington has had in the medical/health care fields, I feel that the University's recommendations and positions should be given full consideration.

Dr. Paulsen is currently head of the Research Department at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital. In addition to its large health sciences programs and the operation of the University Hospital, the University of Washington, is involved in the operation of Childrens Orthopedic Hospital and Medical Center, Harborview Medical Center, Veterans Administration Hospital, and U.S. Public Health Service Hospital.

Other points which should be considered in any recommendation for any follow-up program include practical problems of arranging such a program for 67 persons irradiated at the Oregon State Penitentiary and 64 from Washington State Penitentiary. Further, based on information from Dr. Harvey, Dr. Paulsen and others, the follow-up program is not required from a medical standpoint. Apparently counsel briefed the Manager on this matter; however, I am not aware of any RL position which has been established. I have discussed the above with C. T. Fritz and I understand that he agrees with this approach. If you agree, we will not pursue the matter further until requested by DBER, PNRF or University of Washington to do so.

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Nell Fraser
Contract Administrator's Representative
Contracts and Procurement Division

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