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MAY 26 1978

Addressees

TRIP REPORT - H. U. BROWN, PASO
 DOE PAYMENTS TO RONGELAP-UTIRIK MEDICAL PATIENTS

At the request of the Director, PASO I visited Dr. William Burr, Deputy Director, Division of Biomedical and Environmental Research, on the above matter, during my trip to Washington DC with Roger Ray to attend the DNA Sponsored Enewetak Resolution Meeting, May 3 and 4, 1978.

Background

On December 2, 1974 the ERDA entered into an agreement with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands whereby the TTPI would be reimbursed by ERDA (DOE) for travel and per diem costs incurred by patients who came from Rongelap and Utirik to either Majuro or Ebeye for treatment of illnesses. These funds provided annually by DOE were paid to patients in accordance with TTPI PL. No. 5-52 which generally set forth that these patients would receive transportation costs from and back to Rongelap or Utirik, and also receive \$9.00 per diem throughout their stay on Majuro or Ebeye.

PASO, in performing various duties in the Marshall Islands was made aware of some problems associated with this agreement, and thus brought them to the attention of Drs. Burr and Walter Weyzen as discussed below.

Meeting on May 5, 1978, DOE, 20 Massachusetts Ave., DC

Roger Ray and I discussed the assertion that DOE had not provided sufficient funds to pay many of the claims made under the ERDA-TTPI Agreement No. E(49-7)3159. This amount is \$32,400 per the enclosed letter from the Marshall Islands Budget Officer dated May 2, 1978. This letter was developed at my request during a meeting in Majuro in April 1978, attended by Micronesian Legal Services, the District Director of Health Services, and the Marshalls Budget Officer. Apparently these claims have lain dormant in the Marshalls because

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the funds allocated by DOE to the High Commissioner and in turn to the District Administrator, Marshalls are exhausted. Dr. Burr, Roger Roy, Dr. Weyzen and I discussed the fact that some of the patients have contacted Micronesian Legal Services Corporation to look into the matter of entitlement. We all agreed that it made good sense to honor these claims once we had a handle on how much they were. If funds are available for this perhaps the High Commissioner could be contacted to call for all these outstanding claims to be sent to Saipan from Majuro for review and payment. DOE could then reimburse the TTPI and essentially clean up everything under this agreement.

This brought up another main point of our discussions on this issue, that being the new agreement DOE will enter into with the TTPI to address the new TT Public Law which takes the place of old PL No. 5-52. I told Dr. Burr that PASO would be willing to assist him in the administration of new agreement to the extent he wished. He had mentioned the possibility of putting this in the NV financial plan and in turn our office could be charged with administering the program. I then offered our assistance once decisions are made on handling past claims under the old agreement.

One of the main problems of administering the current agreement, from the Marshall Islands Administration's point of view, is that patients are collecting the per diem and still eating and sleeping at the hospital free of charge. Although this is a Marshalls' problem, the new Public Law and thus the new DOE/TTPI agreement does not stipulate a set per diem rate. I suggested that DOE and the TTPI may want the new agreement to stipulate that some of the DOE funds are to be used to reimburse the hospitals for bed and meal charges. I was told that meal costs, when charged, are \$.50 each. Patients could then be paid an additional daily stipend for incidentals, perhaps \$2.00 or \$3.00. With this type framework it would seem that several things could be accomplished, namely the program would probably be less costly, the patients would continue to be afforded balanced meals, the reimbursement to the hospital would help a Marshalls' administrative and financial problem, and the patients would still have a stipend for incidentals.

Dr. Burr appeared to favor the suggestion that PASO become involved in the administration of the programs resulting from impending decisions and we were all aware that any such action would be cleared through the Nevada Operations Office.

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Roger Ray and William Stanley have seen this report and concur with the content.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By
H. U. BROWN

H. U. Brown
Program Liaison Officer

OP-373
HUB:jhf

Enclosure:
As indicated

Addressees

Mr. Mahlon E. Gates, Manager, NV/DOE
Dr. William W. Burr, Jr., Deputy Director,
Division of Biomedical & Environmental Research
Dr. Walter H. Weyzen, Manager, Human Health Studies
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Mr. Robert W. Taft, AM/PE&B, NV

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