

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

Judson Hardy, Information
Division of Radiological Health, PHS

DATE:

Duncan Clark, Director
Division of Public Information, AEC

RE: REVIEW OF PROPOSED PHS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF UTAH STUDIES

DPI:TT

We have undertaken revision of the second paragraph of the PHS proposed public announcement which you sent for comment by memorandum of August 27. We feel it is important to use dates and be more direct about the association with atmospheric testing rather than to leave it to the newsman to read into the text an unwarranted indictment of underground nuclear weapons testing. Because definitive data may not be obtained, we urge adoption of a new paragraph 2, as follows:

These studies are an additional phase of a long-term investigation being conducted jointly by the State Health Departments of Utah and Nevada and the Division of Radiological Health of the Public Health Service, which began in 1959 as an examination of leukemia deaths occurring in Nevada and Utah since 1950, was expanded in 1963 to include thyroid and bone cancer and congenital malformations. An effort will be made to determine whether a statistically meaningful relationship exists between these types of naturally occurring defects and radiation exposures that might have been received in the 1950s from fallout.

Our technical staff believes that paragraph 3 should be examined more closely for scientific accuracy and, if necessary, reworded to remove any suggestions that cannot be backed by physical evidence. Newsmen or readers are bound to ask: What cellular tissues of the eyes or teeth can be examined so minutely that one may state that cell damage, if present, is due to radiation effects? While we do need language to indicate the extremely low level of concern we want to avoid being trapped by questions whether expected effects are truly observable -- except statistically.

If these changes and recommendations are taken into consideration, we would have no further objections to the proposed PHS announcement.