Editor's note

This newsletter marks the completion of the first year of existence for the Northern California Occupational Health Center. Mandated under Assembly Bill No. 3414, the Center is designed to provide a long range program for research and training in occupational health. The Center is being developed as a cooperative effort of the California Department of Industrial Relations and the University of California.

Under the directive, two Occupational Health Centers were created, one for Northern California and one for Southern California. The Northern Center is headquartered at the School of Public Health on the Berkeley campus, and it includes components at the University School of Medicine and Nursing in San Francisco, the Schools of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the Davis campus and the Labor Occupational Health Program also at the Berkeley campus.

The primary purpose of the new center is to provide, "the training of occupational physicians and nurses, toxicologists, epidemiologists and industrial hygienists. In addition, the centers shall serve as referral centers for occupational illnesses and shall engage in research on the causes, diagnosis and prevention of occupational illnesses ..."

As with any program of this type and size, nothing happens overnight. It takes time to locate staff and faculty; to renovate office and laboratory space; to create a communications network between the components and the public. But, a lot of the groundwork has been done, and the Center is growing.

The first year, hectic and sometimes frustrating, has been a success. Space for the new Center, its classrooms and laboratories, has been renovated at both the Berkeley and San Francisco campuses. Faculty and staff have been appointed and courses have been taught. In some instances, classrooms have been overwhelmed by student response. But, by and large, the problems have been worked out and the Center grows more productive daily. In just one year the Northern California Occupational Health Center has succeeded in creating an organization dedicated to training and research in occupational health.

Center welcomes new faculty

Over the last year the Northern California Occupational Health Center has appointed seven new faculty members as well as hiring research and administrative assistants and secretarial support staff. The new staff is divided between the Berkeley and San Francisco components of the Center.

As the Health Center grows, plans to hire fifteen full-time faculty members are envisioned. The new faculty will conduct occupational health related research, and will teach the new curricula of the Center's component programs. Eventually, the new faculty will be divided between all the campuses participating in the Center. Three of the new faculty will be located at Berkeley, seven will be at San Francisco and three or more will join the Center's program at Davis.

Included in the faculty appointments during this first year are:

- Dr. Susan Pond has been appointed as Assistant Professor of Medicine at the San Francisco campus. Dr. Pond, who was chosen by a University Search Committee, is responsible for organizing the clinical and teaching aspects of the Center at the San Francisco General Medical Center.

- Leslie N. Ray, R.N., M.A. has been appointed Assistant Clinical Professor of Nursing in the School at the San Francisco Campus. Professor Ray earned a B.S. in nursing from UCSF in 1972 and continued to earn her M.A. from the School of Nursing at the University of Washington in 1977. Recently, she has been with the Permanent Medical Group in South San Francisco where she developed skills in occupational nursing.

- Dr. Donald M. Whorton has been appointed to a half time Associate Clinical Professorship of Occupational Medicine in the School of Public Health at the Berkeley campus and in the Department of Medicine on the San Francisco campus. Dr. Whorton is Board Certified in both Occupational Medicine and Internal Medicine. Dr. Whorton, nationally known in the field of Occupational Health, will greatly assist in the creation of the Occupational Medicine Residency on the San Francisco Campus.

- Dr. Toby Mathias has been appointed to an Assistant Professorship in dermatology on a full-time basis. Dr. Mathias, who is one of the nation's outstanding young dermatologists, will provide clinical consultations and will conduct research.

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First year ends as residency begins

An ambitious, public-oriented training program at the U.C. Medical School is adding more facilities as the first year of the Northern California Occupational Health Center ends. Diverse and service-oriented, the Center's Medical School program includes specialized research and training facilities, clinics, occupational health residencies and service laboratories.

For the last year, the Medical School program has provided Grand Rounds for the medical community. Taught bi-weekly by faculty and guest lecturers, the rounds have been presented to overflow crowds of health professionals. The Medical School program has also organized and taught courses on toxicology to Occupational Health students in the nurse practitioner program.

At present, the Med School program is associated with three clinics at the various campuses of the medical school. The clinics include a Tuesday night "workers' clinic." Not only does the staff for the workers' clinic include its own medical professionals, it also draws upon the expertise of the components of the Northern California Occupational Health Center such as the Labor Occupational Health Program and the School of Public Health as well as the Medical School.

A second clinic, which will ultimately serve as a training ground for the occupational health residents, is a classical medical clinic. Held on Friday mornings at San Francisco General Medical Center, the clinic is designed to evaluate medical problems of an occupational nature.

The third clinic is the Employee Health Clinic, also at San Francisco General Hospital. This clinic is responsible for evaluating the occupational health problems of employees of the city and county of San Francisco. The clinic provides annual exams and preventive research. In the last year, evidence has accumulated which suggests excessive hearing loss among San Francisco firemen. Working in conjunction with the School of Public Health, the clinic will test the hearing of firemen to determine the extent of the problems and to offer solutions.

The residency program of the Medical School, slated to begin July 1st, will be a three year program in which the first year of residency will be spent at the School of Public Health earning a Masters of Public Health. The second and third years of residency will be spent in practical training. The work will include a series of six week rotations made up of classes, clinics, research, worksite inspections, toxicology, industrial hygiene and environmental monitoring. Residents who wish may take a six week elective with Cal OSHA or the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health.

Residents who complete the three year program will be Board Eligible in Occupational Medicine, and, if they elect, Board Eligible in Dermatology.

Other Center programs at the Medical School include research into the male reproductive toxicity of pesticides. This research is a series of animal studies and human epidemiological studies to determine the effects of pesticides on the male reproductive system.

Also in progress is the development of an expanded toxicology laboratory. The laboratory is a service unit located at the San Francisco General campus. Negotiations are under way for service contracts with NIOSH, as well as several corporations and unions.

Davis to take leadership role in research for rural industry

The Davis component of the Northern California Occupational Health Center has among the most far-reaching and innovative responsibilities of the Center's programs. Davis has been assigned the task of developing research expertise and training primary care physicians and nurses in the field of occupational health in rural and agricultural industry.

Because of its unique mandate and facilities, Davis will take a leadership role in occupational health problems related to rural and agricultural industry for the entire state, not just Northern California. The Davis campus' role is critical because information on occupational disease in the rural and agricultural workplace is very sketchy. Not only must the quality of medical information be improved, an adequate delivery system must also be developed.

The problems in improving rural occupational health care are many. Worker contact with medical professionals is slight and generally limited to primary care facilities. The medical facilities available for occupational disease diagnosis are few and far between. Thus, there is a very basic need for occupational medical care around the rural workplace. Not only are primary care physicians and nurses schooled in occupational health needed to treat workers in rural areas, but those same physicians and nurses are needed to collect empirical data about the nature and extent of occupational disease.

To further the research and treatment of rural and agricultural industrial occupational disease, the Davis component of the Northern California Occupational Health Center will include both training and research facilities. In the Davis School of Medicine, specialists in occupational medicine will be added to the faculty in the primary care residency and nurse practitioner programs. The new faculty will include an epidemiologist.

A major portion of the Davis component will be the study of inhalation toxicology. This part of the program will function through the School of Veterinary Medicine which already has established a highly sophisticated inhalation toxicology facility.

In the rural and agricultural workplace there is considerable evidence which points to inhalation of chemicals as a major health hazard. The chemicals include a wide variety of pesticides, fungicides, solvents and fertilizers.

Animal toxicology studies are conducted by injecting or feeding the animals with the particular toxic agent under study. Yet, in the workplace, the human is most likely to inhale a potentially toxic substance — a radically different form of exposure.

To create a facility in which toxic substances can be introduced into the atmosphere at a controlled rate is both time consuming and costly. Davis has such a facility. The combination of this research facility and the primary care program will make the Davis component a pioneer in the research and treatment of occupational disease in the rural and agricultural workplace.

The effects of ozone on lung tissue as photographed at the Davis inhalation toxicology facility.
Distinguished guests visit

During the last year the growth of the Northern California Occupational Health Center has been of great interest in the occupational health community. There have been numerous visits from individuals interested in our progress and in our plans. Many of those visitors have offered their support and expertise.

Among our most distinguished visitors have been:
- Professor Irving Selikoff of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Dr. Selikoff, who is world renowned for his work — particularly in the area of asbestos exposure — visited the Berkeley campus under Center sponsorship last January. To a highly receptive audience, he presented a seminar on current developments in occupational health.
- Lloyd Tepper, M.D., editor of the Journal of Occupational Medicine, visited the Center at San Francisco General Hospital where he gave Grand Rounds on exposure to the toxic metal beryllium.
- Dr. John Froines, Associate Director of NIOSH, gave seminars both at Berkeley and at San Francisco General Hospital in February. He also reviewed NIOSH research priorities and their relationship to an expanded program of health hazard evaluations.

The Labor Occupational Health Program

is the only component of the Northern California Occupational Health Center whose specific purpose is to provide long-term and educational materials to unions and other labor relations organizations.

Unlike the San Francisco programs, which have grown dramatically in the last year, the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP), has been operating successfully for over five years. Located on the Berkeley campus, the LOHP grew out of union education programs sponsored by the UC's Institute of Industrial Relations Center for Labor Research and Education.

Initially funded by a Ford Foundation grant, the LOHP received a "New Directions" grant from the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration in 1978.

The LOHP's role in Health Center is unique because the LOHP is geared towards the production of training materials and programs for workers instead of the scientific research and academic training that goes on in the rest of the Center. During its five years of existence, the LOHP has created a well-deserved reputation as a knowledgeable and cooperative source for occupational health and safety information. Thus, the LOHP is an important liaison between the research and professional training components of the Center and labor organizations. By providing this liaison to the worker and the workplace, the LOHP will help the Center to overcome the
Health Center moves into new facilities

Phone calls to the Northern California Occupational Health Center at Warren Hall on the Berkeley campus weren’t returned too rapidly last May 14th. It was moving day. After five months of renovations, the Center’s offices on the third floor of Warren Hall were complete and the staff was busily moving the center into its new, permanent home.

The temporary offices abandoned by the Center’s move will be renovated to provide additional laboratory space for the School of Public Health’s component of the new Center.

The new offices on the third floor and the soon to be renovated space on the second floor will complement the industrial hygiene and toxicology laboratories on the first floor of Warren Hall where renovations were completed last July. These high hazard facilities were renovated with University monies in what turned out to be a first step in the creation of facilities for the Northern California Occupational Health Center.

The newly renovated office and laboratory space on the three floors in Warren Hall will form the nucleus of the training and research complex that is Berkeley’s component of the Center. Warren Hall will give the center a permanent home, from which to oversee the components of the Center as well as creating new facilities for the School of Public Health’s Occupational Health program.

Other renovations which have been completed by the year old center are at the San Francisco campus. A teaching and administrative center was renovated on the fifth floor of Building 30 at the San Francisco General Hospital.

Also, at the San Francisco campus, the Occupational Health Clinic at S.F. General has been completed and has begun to evaluate patients earlier this year.

Center welcomes new faculty ...

Continued from front page on pesticides and related compounds.

- Dr. Joseph Nachtmann has accepted a postdoctoral research position in toxicology on the Berkeley campus. Dr. Nachman has recently completed his doctoral studies in the Department of Pharmacology at Ohio State University in Columbus. Dr. Nachman has three years experience in Industrial Hygiene and is Board Certified in the Comprehensive Practice of Industrial Hygiene.
- Gerald Buttimovitz was appointed on February 1, 1980 as Assistant Professor in Laboratory Medicine. Dr. Buttimovitz is an Analytical Toxicologist. He was appointed to his position after being selected from a field of 37 candidates. Dr. Buttimovitz will initially devote the majority of his time to obtaining toxicological and industrial hygiene certification for the Toxicology Laboratory.
- Dr. Ronald Talcott has just accepted the Toxicology Research position in the Northern California Center.
- Guido Rosati formerly principal industrial hygienist at the Mare Island Naval Shipyard has been appointed as a quarter time lecturer in industrial hygiene at the School of Public Health. Mr. Rosati will add considerable “real world” experience to the program.

In addition to the new faculty members, most of the Center’s support and secretarial staff has been hired. New support staff includes five student research assistants who have been hired at the Berkeley campus to research the mutagenic and carcinogenic properties under the direction of Dr. Wei. The new research assistants will also research new approaches to air sampling for pesticides under the direction of Dr. Rappaport. These research activities will be carried out with the close collaboration of the Berkeley and San Francisco campuses.