

November 19, 2001

NIOSH Docket Office
Robert A. Taft Laboratories; MS C34
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45226

RE:

To Whom It may Concern:

I have been given Authorization for Representation by my mother, . I am writing a rebuttal on your decision to deny eligibility for benefits to survivors of former employees who contracted chronic lymphocytic leukemia after working, in the 1950s, in the Gaseous Diffusion Plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This is in accordance with Federal Register Vol. 66, No. 194, Page 50967. This applies to the Department of Health and Human Services (42CFR Part 81).

I would like to present to you, first-hand information on my father, who worked at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This plant was specifically name under "Special Exposure Cohort Employees," under "Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program". He was at this plant for more than 250 days prior to February 1, 1992. He was assigned to this plant in the 1950s. Before he was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia, my father had no indication of an autoimmune disease. By this statement, I am attempting to impress upon you that he was in excellent health. I strongly believe, because of his excellent health, his body was able to reject symptoms of chronic lymphocytic leukemia. However, over the long term, these symptoms could not be ignored.

I truly believe he contracted chronic lymphocytic leukemia at the time of his employment at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant, due to radiation exposure. If controls for radiation monitoring had been as they are today, my father could still be alive.

I worked in radiation areas from 1981 through 2000. Radiation exposures were closely monitored. When a person reached his or her radiation dose for the year, he or she was not allowed into the high radiation areas for the rest of the year. These controls were not in place in the 1950s.

My father was exposed to the point he had to go home and change clothing and shower, because he was instructed to do so by his superiors, due to radiation contamination. His perspiration at night would leave yellow stains on the pillowcases and sheets as he slept. He would have color changes in his hands when washing after work. These things all occurred at the time he worked at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant at Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

He was diagnosed with chronic lymphocytic leukemia in 1974, close to 20 years after working at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant.

There is no history of cancer or autoimmune disease in his family. This condition was not genetic. He had no other autoimmune diseases.

I have done extensive research on chronic lymphocytic leukemia, and I was unable to find a cause; it is unknown. I have learned, from this research: "Relationship to radiation, carcinogenic chemicals or viruses has not been determined." In view of this, how can a determination be made that my father's chronic lymphocytic leukemia was not caused by high exposure at this plant. It is well known that employees received high doses of radiation exposure at this plant. Otherwise, why was this plant specifically listed?

In closing, I will reiterate that I have a strong belief that the radiation exposure, which my father encountered, was the cause of his chronic lymphocytic leukemia. He made the statement, when first diagnosed with this disease, that it was due to his exposure and the poor controls at the Gaseous Diffusion Plant in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. His doctor, at M.D. Anderson Cancer Research Center in Houston, Texas, asked him if he had been exposed to radiation, at the time of his diagnosis and treatment.

I believe this Federal Act should include chronic lymphocytic leukemia, as there is no medical evidence, produced by many years of research, which would exclude chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

I request your serious consideration to reverse this decision to exclude chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

Sincerely,

Cc: Ms. Diane Anderson, U.S. Department of Labor
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Larry E. Craig, United States Senator
Michael Crapo, United States Senator
Michael Simpson, United States Congressman