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**Miller, Diane M. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)**

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**From:****Sent:** Thursday, March 29, 2007 10:38 PM**To:** NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)**Cc:** dan.lamb@mail.house.gov; GreenST@yahoogroups.com; senator@senatorlibous.com; lupardd@assembly.state.ny.us**Subject:** 103 - Endicott Project Comments

Here's some more comments from former IBM workers from <http://www.pressconnects.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070329/NEWS01/703290353/1006> article in today's newspaper and their family who worked in the Endicott plant

Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 7:16 am Post subject: IBM Study

IBM's attitudes and actions are despicable, not only with their "environmental" policies over the years but their continual and systematic public smokescreens. It is to their benefit for things to drag on and gain them distance.

Now that facts are coming out, watch for even more IBM roadblocks. Instead, no matter the cost we must let \*whole\* truth come out -- name some names of those responsible -- and let the facts make their way through the criminal justice system, where this really should be airing. Thank you Rep. Hinchey for doing what IBM will not do for its own employees, past and current.

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**grace13795**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 6

Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 8:06 am Post subject:

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS GO BACK INTO THE OBITUARIES FROM ATLEAST THE LAST 20-30 YEARS AND SEE HOW MANY PEOPLE WORKED AT IBM AND DIED..... ☹

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**Wynantskill**

Joined: 29 Mar 2007

Posts: 1

Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 9:00 am Post subject: IBM-Endicott

I worked on the nickel and gold line in building 41. Pulling panels from the line, exposing them, laminating them etc. The building always had a "toxic" smell and we were never given any gloves or special safety equipment to wear when handling panels....I remember coming home with holes burnt into my pants....My boss would laugh, "You must have wiped your hands on your pants." In 1991 (at the age of 27), I was diagnosed with subretinal neovascularization in my left eye (similar to macular degeneration). I lost my central vision. Ophthalmologists have consistently told me my condition could be a direct result of working at IBM. Two of my co-workers: Tom Olivieri and Bob Harrison died from cancer. I am glad someone is finally urging someone to look at the conditions at IBM Endicott....This isn't about money....I am 43 yrs old...Nothing can be done to improve or correct my vision...If I had to do over again, I never would have accepted employment at IBM or in Bldg 41.

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### grace13795

Joined: 28 Mar 2007  
Posts: 6

▣ Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 9:46 am Post subject:

I UNDERSTAND THE HOLES IN THE PANTS MY HUSBAND USE TO COME HOME WITH THE SAME THING FROM WORKING IN THE 18 BUILDINGS,HE WOULD GET BLOODY NOSES,AND HE DIED AT THE AGE OF 28 FROM A BRAIN TUMOR AND NEVER WAS SICK BEFORE HE WORKED THERE.....

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### Betty

Joined: 29 Mar 2007  
Posts: 1

▣ Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 9:59 am Post subject: Cancer study/ IBM

I think that they need to include the Owego plant in this study!

I worked for IBM in the Owego plant for 20 years, the first 15 years were in the "wet process area" where I was exposed to trichloroethylene and other chemicals that I am not sure of the names. This past October I was operated on for colon cancer and am now going through chemo treatments, also have started having some tremors in my hands for which I take medication. When the tremors started my Doctor asked me if I ever worked around chemicals.

My son also worked for IBM in the maintenance dept. so he did work some around these same machines. He has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Since I know of no family issues with Parkinsons or the tremors, I believe it could be the result of the chemicals that I worked with at IBM.

▣ Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 1:43 pm Post subject:

WELL I GUESS THAT SOMEONE AT THE AGE OF 23 JUST GOT A BRAIN TUMOR WHEN THEY WHERE NEVER SICK BEFORE THEY WORKED AROUND CHEMICALS .....

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### wanabe

Joined: 29 Mar 2007

Posts: 1

▢ Posted: Thu Mar 29, 2007 4:01 pm Post subject:

When I worked there in the mid 80s I remember my manager telling me that IBM Endicott was the biggest user of chemicals east of the Mississippi. I don't know if it was true, but during the time when investigations into the usage a lot of their work was being farmed out to vendors like ADC, Hadco & Chenango Industries.

I am a retired IBM employee with 30 yrs. of service. I was hired in the mid sixties. I worked with many chemicals in the early years, that later were considered cancer causing. I had several bouts with dermatology issues, and was told at that time I had become sensitized to those chemicals. Later I was diagnosed with cancer at age 54. So I feel that this study is very important and urge anyone who was a former employee, and has health issues to get involved

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### lisae

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 1

▢ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 6:42 am Post subject: IBM Cancer Study

My father worked for IBM for over 35 years, and for many years as a manager in manufacturing. He died of Pancreatic cancer...connection?

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### grace13795

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 6

▢ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 7:02 am Post subject: cancer study

MY DAUGHTERS FATHER WORKED FOR A CONTRACTOR IN 1986 IN IBM AND WORKED IN CHEMICALS THAT WOULD PUT HOLES IN HIS BOOTS AND IN 1987 FOUND OUT THAT HE HAD A BRAIN TUMOR AT

THE AGE OF 23 AND DIED AT THE AGE OF 28.

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**grace13795**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 6

▢ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 7:19 am Post subject:

Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 8:02 am Post subject: cancer study

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MY DAUGHTERS FATHER WORKED FOR A CONTRACTOR IN 1986 IN IBM AND WORKED IN CHEMICALS THAT WOULD PUT HOLES IN HIS BOOTS AND PANTS AND IN 1987 FOUND OUT THAT HE HAD A BRAIN TUMOR(CANCER) AT THE AGE OF 23 AND DIED AT THE AGE OF 28.

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**IBM1974**

Joined: 21 Oct 2006

Posts: 6

▢ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 8:57 am Post subject:

Credit for getting NIOSH moving on this should go to Rick White of the IBM union for pushing this the last few years.

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**Champion of the underdog**

Joined: 20 Feb 2007

Posts: 14

▢ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 9:02 am Post subject:

Just start with the people that worked in building 18.

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champion of the underdog

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**grace13795**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007  
Posts: 6

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 10:39 am Post subject:

what do you mean Just start with the people that worked in building 18.??????

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**Senna**

Joined: 13 Dec 2006  
Posts: 21

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 1:55 pm Post subject:

Why has it taken so so long to finally look at IBM's records? Why weren't these records made available long ago? I hope we are not looking at gross negligence here.

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**workingman**

Joined: 27 Nov 2006  
Posts: 82

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 2:51 pm Post subject:

Quote: "Why has it taken so long to finally look at IBM's records?" The answers are in the article. (1) the fact that there is a high incidence of cancers, etc. was only verified relatively recently (August 2005), (2) the study will cost \$3.1 M dollars (where does that come from?), and (3) IBM has resisted giving out the data on employees because of privacy concerns.

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**PitchGod**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 2

Location: Endwell

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 4:19 pm Post subject: TCE Pollution in Endicott

One of the reasons that IBM does NOT want a study of workers health is because I believe the cancer rates are so high for employees that IBM is worried it will cost them a bundle in lawsuits. They are hoping to drag this out as long as possible because the more employees that die will be the less for them to worry about. I also believe that IBM should at least have the decency to pay the health insurance for the people with related chemical cancer. I say all this, because most of the people I know who worked there died from various types of cancer. Who cares about the privacy rights when they are dead? 😡

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**workingman**

Joined: 27 Nov 2006

Posts: 82

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 4:41 pm Post subject:

You say "Who cares about the privacy rights when they are dead?" Hmmm, their families? Also, the information to be released is about everyone who ever worked in an area of possible exposure (or possibly everyone who ever worked anywhere on the site). So, I guess those folks and their families, mostly living, might care. As for paying for insurance for those with chemical related cancers, I doubt it will ever be proven conclusively that the exposure to chemicals used at the plant was a direct cause of those illnesses.

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**stevie**

Joined: 11 Nov 2006

Posts: 16

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 6:19 pm Post subject: IBM chemicals

IBM insiders knew full well the extent of the chemical "plume" beneath vast residential areas of Endicott but kept their mouths shut out of fear of losing their jobs. Fat good that did us. Some insiders also knew that at one point, more chemicals were being recovered than had been reported spilled -- pointing to leaks and unreported spills through negligence, incompetence or ciminal acts, if true.

Both total reported spills, leaks and "emissions" and total amounts recovered by chemical type should be quite findable -- and made public.

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### **mamaofdil&eth**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 1

Location: Barton, NY

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 6:49 pm Post subject:

Well, you don't have to pay me 3.1 million dollars to tell you that something is causing cancer in employees that worked for IBM for extended periods of time. Especially to those that also lived within close proximity of the plant. I am not from this area, but have lived and worked here now for about 6 years. I worked for EIT for about 2 1/2 years, and I saw 3 employee's that worked for IBM previously, die from cancer. One of them was a manager that I knew very well. It only took months for his health to deteriorate. I still work on the IBM campus, and I worry everyday if I am being exposed to anything that might affect me in 20 years. It's just sad that IBM is acting this way in response to employee's they claim to hold so dear.

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### **flutterbye**

Joined: 28 Mar 2007

Posts: 2

□ Posted: Wed Mar 28, 2007 10:11 pm Post subject:

My brother and at least 2 other kids that grew up in the same neighborhood all got testicular cancer around the same time in their life all around the age 35. It is not a very common cancer. I find it very strange. Is there a link with IBM????? We live in West Endicott and I never drink the water. They are testing ground for chemicals here.

### **UAW to Congress:**

Make OSHA set mandatory standards for chemical exposures

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Thursday March 29, 2007

## NEWS

## Lawmakers push IBM cancer study \$3.1M needed to look into workers' illness rate

By [Tom Wilber](#)  
Press & Sun-Bulletin

ENDICOTT --U.S. Rep. Maurice D. Hinchey, D-Hurley, a member of the federal Appropriations Committee, said Wednesday he would work to ensure funding for a \$3.1 million study to determine cancer rates of people who have worked at IBM's Endicott plant since the 1960s.

"I feel confident it will happen," he said. "It is something that needs to be done."

The study, proposed by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, would tap the personnel records of 28,000 employees since the 1960s and industrial hygiene data, including air tests for chemicals at various locations in the plant.

It would cross reference that information with state and federal cancer registries to see whether workers exposed to chemicals, including trichloroethylene, were more likely to develop cancer than other people.

If the answer is yes, the agency would consider a follow-up study to try to pinpoint a cause.

Lynne Pinkerton, an official with NIOSH, told community members Tuesday night that necessary records could be subpoenaed from IBM if need be, but lack of funding could kill the plan.

Ari Fishkind, a spokesman for IBM, said Wednesday the company is cooperating with the investigation.

"As always, we remain committed to working with the agency," he said.

NIOSH, which conducts studies that help researchers learn more about occupational hazards in the interest of preventing them, works on a \$250 million annual budget, said Fred Blosser, a spokesman for the agency. Funding priorities -- determined partly by Congress -- have yet to be determined for the 2008 year, which begins Oct. 1.

Previous studies in Endicott by the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry were directed by a provision -- authored by Hinchey -- in a 2004 appropriations bill. That work included assessment of cancer risks from industrial solvents that tainted the village water supply and emissions from the former IBM plant on North Street, now owned by Huron Real Estate Associates. In most cases, agency scientists determined the risks

Zoom



THOMAS LA BARBERA / Press & Sun-Bulletin

Dorlene Walker of Johnson City is shown with notebooks of her health records. Walker said she suffers from bladder cancer she contracted while working in chemical areas at IBM-Endicott.

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were low but calculable.

Work by federal and state agencies looking at issues involving health and pollution in the village has totaled about \$1.4 million, said Jeff Lieberman, a spokesman for Hinchey.

"Funding for the research hasn't been an issue until now," he said.

But the proposed IBM study would be much larger in scope than any previous undertaking.

Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., also said she would support the study, but could not offer specifics about funding as of Wednesday.

"The people of Endicott deserve answers," she said. "I also believe that IBM should provide free and open access to the records that the researchers need."

The fate of the IBM study is also tied to the community's response, Pinkerton said. Scientists would not do it if the community lacked interest or did not agree on the approach.

Residents have until May 28 to file comments on the plan, which was handed out at the meeting and is available online, and at the George F. Johnson library in Endicott.

Residents and former workers interviewed for this article and who spoke at Tuesday's meeting said the study could provide important insights about occupational risks associated with working at plants like IBM.

"It needs to be understood," said Tom Evans, who worked at the plant from 1964 to 1992. "I don't have the understanding if they don't do the study."

Evans, who is 67, developed testicular cancer when he was 44 and survived the disease after surgery and radiation treatments. He worked in maintenance and sometimes was exposed to large amounts of TCE in the line of his daily work -- which he believes was a factor in his illness.

Rick White, a labor advocate seeking a cancer study at the plant for four years, said he supports the NIOSH plan but was hoping for a stronger commitment. He has gathered information from more than 60 IBM workers and family members who have developed health issues they think could be related to chemical exposure.

"I would think they (NIOSH) would say 'yes, we will get the funding to do this and yes, we will do a follow-up study to look for the cause of these illnesses,'" said White, who is a spokesman for Alliance@IBM.

Dorlene Walker, a Johnson City resident and IBM worker for 15 years, said she has seen many former colleagues develop illnesses, including cancer, and she is confident future studies would show more than an anecdotal connection between IBM workers and elevated cancer rates.

"I have seen women have miscarriages, I have seen people with kidney failure, and I have seen people die of cancer," she said. "And people think I am crazy."

Walker, who is 55, was diagnosed with bladder cancer three years ago. She worked for IBM from 1978 to 1993.

## STORYCHAT

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My Dad worked at IBM endicott in building 22 for over 20 years. Of the twelve in his department, five individuals are sick. Apparently two have multiple sclerosis and three (including my Dad) have Parkinsons disease. My grandfather also worked for over 20 years at IBM and also had Multiple Sclerosis and my stepfather (also retired from IBM) suffers from MS as well. This is certainly cause for concern.

Posted by: **Darcie1232** on Wed Apr 04, 2007 8:21 pm

I guess the ideal study of this would be to find a company with 28,000 workers

over the same time period and for the company to be one of a pollution free environment and compare results. I would be surprised if a study of IBM workers found them to be less prone to cancer than the surrounding community, this might present a whole new problem, like, why?

Posted by: **PitchGod** on Sat Mar 31, 2007 8:50 am

When I worked there in the mid 80s I remember my manager telling me that IBM Endicott was the biggest user of chemicals east of the Mississippi. I don't know if it was true, but during the time when investigations into the usage a lot of their work was being farmed out to vendors like ADC, Hadco & Chenango Industries.

Posted by: **wanabe** on Thu Mar 29, 2007 5:01 pm

WELL I GUESS THAT SOMEONE AT THE AGE OF 23 JUST GOT A BRAIN TUMOR WHEN THEY WERE NEVER SICK BEFORE THEY WORKED AROUND CHEMICALS .....

Posted by: **grace13795** on Thu Mar 29, 2007 2:43 pm

Is this the 4th or 5th go round on this subject? I remember that in the 80's there was a big investigation of toxic chemicals in the semiconductor industry at IBM and elsewhere. Unfortunately it is rare that even a good correlation is really indicative of a particular contaminate as being the source of a specific illness. Only two cases that did conclusively come to mind- smoking causing lung cancer and the specific effect asbestos has on the lungs.

I can tell you this- I worked for IBM for 30 years in the semiconductor and module parts of the business. IBM did whatever it could to diligently protect the safety of its employees. New regulations were put in place immediately if a chemical was found to be hazardous. In fact, most of the chemicals you use in your home regularly are controlled by OSHA guidelines in IBM's industrial environment. IBM always followed OSHA recommendations. Unfortunately, the human impact of some chemicals was not known until well after a large number of people got exposed. Any industry using chemicals has seen the same problem .

In addition, it is common for workers, even after training, to ignore the safety procedures and hide that fact. It is also not uncommon to have accidental spills of chemicals, which are addressed by a Hazmat team ASAP, but someone can get exposed before the situation is controlled.

The problem is that most of these workers who got cancer or other illnesses were exposed to a lot of other environmental hazards, not just the ones at work. For example -smoking, air pollution from local factories , businesses and cars, use of home chemicals, pesticides, etc, etc. all increased during the 60',70's, and 80's. Can you really identify that they were not the causes of a particular disease? No, you can't. Mathematical models and statistics can not eliminate any of these hazards.

Let me give you a specific example: In the late fifties, early sixties I used carbon tetrachloride to strip wax from a car to paint it. It was removed from the market by governmental order because it was found to cause cancer. The available and government approved replacement chemical was trichloroethylene, which I promptly purchased and used. For both chemicals, bought publicly at a store, I never read the warnings and just soaked rags with them to wipe down a car paint finish for painting, bare handed, no gloves.

Is there any way for a scientist or statistician to separate out the effects of these chemicals, plus smoking for 20 years, plus any other number of other possible cancer causing agents outside IBM from exposures to chemicals from my years working in IBM? No, not really.

So, I am not a believer in exhaustive studies that probably will not prove much of anything. I do hope that people having illnesses that they believe were caused by chemical exposure look at all the possibilities and not just the 'target' who they think should pay for their problems. The course of the study will have to be long and the results will probably be inconclusive.

Posted by: **glenn guhman** on Thu Mar 29, 2007 1:56 pm

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