Draft Document for Public Review and Comment:
An Assessment of the Feasibility of a Study of Cancer among Former Employees of the IBM Facility in Endicott, New York Docket #NIOSH-103

I would like to suggest that it would be most appropriate to compare cancer rates for those former employees of the IBM Facility in Endicott, NY with controls living in the same place as the subjects. The reason is that cancer rates in the United States vary considerably by location due to such factors as solar ultraviolet-B radiation and vitamin D production. I have submitted comments along this line (Grant, 2006). Other support for this point is found in papers such as Grant and Garland (2006) and Boscoe and Schymura (2006). However, some care would have to be taken for those who moved from NY to sunnier locations such as Florida. There may be some effect of solar UVB in reducing the risk of cancer being detected which would have to be considered. There are many more papers on vitamin D and cancer, which can be found readily at www.pubmed.gov.

As for the effects of smoking on cancer risk, in my ecological studies I use lung cancer incidence or mortality rates with reasonably good success. From what I recall about the earlier IBM study, lung cancer rates were lower than average at IBM facilities, suggesting both that IBM employees do not smoke as much as the rest of the population, and that air pollution that would lead to lung cancer is also low in the plants.

Please contact me if you want more information related to my comments.


William B. Grant, Ph.D. Sunlight, Nutrition, and Health Research Center (SUNARC ) 2115 Van Ness Ave., Suite 101 San Francisco, CA 94109, USA www.sunarc.org