



So, do you think Dr. Kross is continuing his study to determine if you are at greater risk of cancer? THINK AGAIN.

Editor's Note: It didn't occur to me, when I asked the question in the last issue of THE GRASS ROOTS, that GCSAA had actually decided to terminate Dr. Kross and his study of golf course superintendent susceptibility to cancer from Phase II of the mortality study. When Joe O'Brien told me that over the phone, I was literally stunned.

Subsequent to that conversation, I received the following letter from Bruce Williams.

Two thoughts occur to me:

- 1. I have no doubt that GCSAA can afford whatever it costs to find out if we are at greater risk of cancer than the population in general. Like any other organization, company or family, it is a matter of priority. What could possibly be more important than our health?*
- 2. As Bruce concedes in the last two paragraphs of his letter, GCSAA didn't bother to tell anyone about dropping Prof. Kross from Phase II. Was that an oversight? Did someone "forget" to share the information? Was it calculated?*

I don't know. But this is always clear, with this issue and many others over the years past: GCSAA will always be better off when it consciously operates an open door, fresh air, tell-all policy. When secrecy (or even the perception of it) reigns, so does suspicion.

MSM

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July 12, 1996

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Dear Monroe:

I read your editorial in the May/June issue of *The Grass Roots* and I would like to clarify the post-Mortality Study activities and bring you up to date regarding the status of this important project. Let me assure you that the health of golf course personnel is very important to the leadership of GCSAA. That is exactly why the Board funded the Mortality Study in the first place and approved GCSAA's Safety Awareness Program as a result of that study.

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When the results of Dr. Kross's study were released in Dallas two years ago, many of us in the golf course maintenance profession asked ourselves, "What about me? Does this mean that I will get cancer?" Because of the alarming nature of those preliminary results, we realized it was extremely important to identify what the most appropriate next step should be. The Board of Directors assigned this task to the Research Committee and funded outside health and safety experts to help develop a sound post-Mortality Study program.

Technical Assessment Systems, Inc., of Washington, D.C., was contracted in December, 1994, to:

1. Conduct a peer review of Dr. Kross's manuscript to be submitted to the *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*.
2. Review follow-up research proposals:

A 30-month occupational assessment study was proposed to identify health and safety risk factors for golf course personnel and to implement an occupational exposure assessment and hazard identification techniques on representative golf courses. The initial estimated cost of this study was nearly \$700,000.

An 18-month study was proposed to assess the current health status of golf course personnel, using surveys, focus groups and other methods of data gathering. Estimated cost for this study and a final report was between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

3. Recommend an appropriate strategy for follow-up action.

GCSAA is dedicated to serving its members, advancing their profession and enriching the quality of golf and its environment.

Mr. Monroe S. Miller

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With TAS's counseling, the Research Committee faced a critically important question: "Should GCSAA commit the huge amounts of funding necessary to conduct a long-term cohort study regarding cancer and pesticide use? Or would a more appropriate course of action be to accept the fact that *no occupation is devoid of health risks* and to develop an extensive safety awareness program to educate members of the proper techniques to minimize risk exposure?"

The Research Committee recommended the safety education and awareness approach. This approach offered not only lower costs, but also a much larger positive health impact for our members. Dr. Kross's preliminary research spotlighted the importance of behavior and lifestyle factors in cancer risks. The mainstream media are effective at covering the health risks associated with smoking and poor diet. What was lacking was comprehensive specific do's and don'ts for at-work behavior. The comprehensive safety awareness program the Research Committee envisioned would include methods to reduce the risks associated with maintaining golf course in many operational areas besides just pesticide exposure, such as U.V. radiation; exposure to fuels and solvents; safety in the maintenance facility, especially around brazing and welding equipment; operator safety of mechanized equipment; and many others.

Letters Continued

This vision was the result of much discussion in the Research and Education committees, hard work by staff and input from health and safety experts. Nearly \$40,000 has been spent in the development of this program so far. Much has already been accomplished, including:

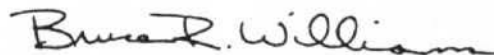
- Health and safety experts were hired to assist GCSAA in formulating an appropriate post-Mortality Study strategy.
- A complete inventory of safety-related education programs, correspondence courses and videos was developed.
- Three new safety-related education seminars were created in FY 95-96, and two additional ones will be added in FY 96-97.
- Forty-three health and safety experts were invited to submit proposals for their vision of how GCSAA's Safety Awareness Program should be structured and implemented. Twenty-three proposals were received and are currently being evaluated. Selection of the consultant is scheduled to be completed by September.
- GCSAA has obtained a grant of \$30,000 for the Safety Awareness Program from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program (PESP). This marks the first time in GCSAA's history that such a governmental grant has been received.

After the consultant is contracted, GCSAA will continue interdepartmental activities to implement the Safety Awareness Program. With the aid of the PESP grant, the breadth and scope of these activities may now be expanded.

We apparently have not done a good enough job in getting the word out regarding the many behind-the-scenes activities that have occurred in developing this program. However, the detailed process involving member and committee input, staff resources and the use of various outside experts takes a great deal of time. Organizations with the emphasis on member involvement are like that. I can assure you that this deliberate process is due to the fact that we want to do it right for the maximum benefit of our members.

Wouldn't you agree that we owe you that?

Sincerely,



Bruce R. Williams, CGCS
President

BRW:dah

Enclosure

cc: GCSAA Board of Directors
Wisconsin GCSA Board of Directors