

## Iowa Medical School Selected for Golf Course Pesticides Study

The University of Iowa's College of Medicine has been selected by a major golf foundation to conduct an important new study of occupational pesticide exposure among golf course superintendents.

The foundation, GCSAA Scholarship & Research, announced that Iowa's Dr. Burton Kross will lead the first-ever independent examination of cancer and illness trends among superintendents.

Dr. Kross and his team will conduct a thorough study of causes of death among superintendents over the past 23 years. They will attempt to determine whether superintendents have higher-than-average rates of cancers or other illnesses that could have been caused by long-term occupational exposure to pesticides.

"This is an important first step in our association's commitment to addressing concerns about our use of pesticides," said Randy Nichols, CGCS, head of the foundation and president of GCSAA. "We feel we have an obligation to our members and to the golf community to document the safety of our practices."

The initial study will focus on superintendents, the individuals who manage golf courses, because they are typically exposed to both concentrated and diluted (applied) pesticides throughout the course of their careers. Based on the results of this project, later studies may examine health

trends among living superintendents, course workers and even players.

"The results of this first study will give us an idea of the worst case scenario," said Nichols. He explained that the superintendents in the mortality sample were much less likely to have taken the safety precautions that are standard now and that today's pesticides are better tested and commonly considered to be less hazardous than products used in the past.

The University of Iowa study should be complete early next year. Plans call for preliminary findings to be presented at the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference in Dallas next February. The study, which will cost an estimated \$80,000, will be funded by GCSAA S&R thanks to donations from golf clubs, individual superintendents and state and local superintendents associations. According to Nichols, the foundation is still seeking direct contributions to offset the costs of the current study and to support future follow-up research. To make a contribution, contact the GCSAA development department at 913/841-2240.

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