

GCSAA Announces Next Phase of Health Research Program

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America announced plans on February 6 to implement the second phase of the association's planned in-depth study of occupational health issues. GCSAA will launch a new series of health research projects and expand its commitment to chemical applicator education.

The new series will advance a preliminary statistical study conducted by an independent research team from the University of Iowa College of Medicine. Results of the study, commissioned by GCSAA Scholarship & Research, were announced at the annual conference in Dallas.

The study was a statistical analysis of death certificates of 618 former GCSAA members who died between 1970 and 1992.

Researchers found that the group had a higher rate of mortality from lung cancer than the general population. They also found higher-than-average mortality for a number of other cancers, including brain, large intestine, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and prostate.

The research team was led by Dr. Burton Kross, UI associate professor of preventive medicine and environmental health, and director of the UI's Institute of Agricultural Medicine and Occupational Health.

"From a public and occupational health perspective, the excess number of lung cancer deaths is a primary concern," Kross said. Lung and other head and neck cancers have been strongly associated with cigarette and cigar smoking, but Kross strongly cautioned that no cause-and-effect relationship to any illness can be determined by this statistical analysis. According to

researchers, a statistical study cannot be interpreted to link any particular factor to cause death.

Stephen F. Mona, GCSAA executive director/CEO, said, "GCSAA initiated and financed this study because we needed to establish a baseline for future research. We now have that baseline and can better identify what merits further investigation."

"Our mission in funding this independent mortality study was to begin the first phase of an overall look at occupational health and safety issues that affect our members," Mona continued. "This is a long-term commitment to ensuring that superintendents work in a safe and healthy environment."

The next phase of the overall effort could include helping association members stop smoking, expanding GCSAA's current education and training programs, and completing a statistical mortality ratio study to put UI's preliminary data into context.

"We also think this gives us an opportunity to forge new partnerships with groups that can help us accomplish our mission," Mona said. "For example, the chemical manufacturers have made great strides in packaging and formulation over the past decade. This is one more reason to work closely with them in their efforts to develop new technology in products and packaging. Another example could be working with an organization like the American Cancer Society on the smoking issue. This also gives GCSAA the opportunity to continue to strongly encourage and support the Environmental Protection Agency."

EDUCATION NOTES

The educational portion of the March meeting will address computer networking for superintendents in the Mid-Atlantic. Dr. J. Kevin Mathias from the Institute of Applied Agriculture of the University Maryland, will update our membership on InAgOnLine, the pilot computer networking program in use for 1994 by some Mid-Atlantic superintendents. For those using InAgOnLine, this will be an update and a reminder to actively participate in the program. For others this is a look at an excellent tool for information transfer between superintendents and a source of updates on pest activity and related issues.

As we ease into March our schedules fill up quickly and priorities must be set. I suggest top priority should be spending a day or a half-day with your Assistant, Committee Chairman, Golf Professional or General Manager discussing turfgrass or any subject relating to our profession. These people rarely get an opportunity to hear first-hand about the world superintendents operate within. During March you will have two opportunities to spend quality time key people from your organization. They are:

✓ Thursday, March 10—
USGA Regional Conference at Dupont Country Club in Wilmington

✓ Saturday March 12—
MAAGCS and the Maryland State Golf Association will sponsor the Golf Course Superintendent and Club Official Forum at Greenspring Valley Hunt Club in Garrison, Md.

For more information on either of these seminars, call Sean Remington at Chevy Chase Country Club—301-656-6323.