New Endowed Chair at University of Utah to Benefit Utah Workers’ Health & Safety and Honor 20th Century Pioneer

Toward the end of his career, Dr. Richards established the Richards Memorial Medical Foundation using his own savings and the help of his brother Willard B. Richards, Jr., to make his vision of ongoing community service a reality. Dr. Richards charged his family and close friends who served as directors of the foundation with carrying on his legacy, which included improving workplace safety and health and supporting medical education, research and practice. Over the years, the foundation has fulfilled his wishes, and more recently, it has partnered with Workers Compensation Fund to establish the Dr. Paul S. Richards Safe Workplace Scholarships for graduate students studying industrial health and occupational medicine at the RMC. “We can’t say enough good about Workers Compensation Fund. WCF has helped us accomplish so much with the foundation, and this endowed chair is a natural extension of all that my grandfather stood for. We are thrilled to make it possible, along with Workers Compensation Fund,” added Clark.

WCF is likewise pleased to help in the effort. “At Workers Compensation Fund, one of our biggest priorities is helping the more than 30,000 companies we work with improve safety for their employees,” said Dennis Lloyd, WCF senior vice president and general counsel. “It has been perfect for us to partner with the Rocky Mountain Center and the Richards family over the years. We are proud to be part of honoring Dr. Paul S. Richards’ legacy with this endowed chair, and to ensure that the RMC continues to further the cause of workplace safety for years to come.”

As for being named the first recipient of the endowed chair, Dr. Hegmann said, “It is amazing. At a recent conference, I told the 16 other ERC directors about the upcoming announcement, and they burst into applause. It brings tremendous additional prestige to the Rocky Mountain Center to have an endowed chair, particularly in an academic arena that does not usually receive this type of recognition. It also benefits Utah and other western workers and employers. Anything that strengthens the RMC will improve the business climate, increasing our ability to reduce injuries in the workplace.”
Roger Jensen has served on the RMCOEH Advisory Board since 2004. His participation strengthens the regional representation on the Board and connects the RMCOEH to the NIOSH supported programs at Montana Tech. Roger joined the Montana Tech faculty in 1999 and is currently a Professor in the Safety, Health, and Industrial Hygiene Department. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in occupational safety, systems safety, and ergonomics.

Montana Tech is a small, technically oriented university with an enrollment of about 2400 students. Intercollegiate sports teams compete in the same conference with Westminster College in Salt Lake. A Training Project Grant from NIOSH helps support programs leading to a B.S. in Occupational Safety and Health, and an M.S. in Industrial Hygiene.

Prior to this academic appointment, Roger worked seven years as the Senior Ergonomist for a technical services company in Ohio, and 22 years in research and management positions with NIOSH. His initial assignment in 1969 with the NIOSH predecessor (Bureau of Occupational Safety and Health) was facilitated by his cousin, Jeffrey Lee -- the former director of the industrial hygiene program at the U of U.

Roger received his B.S. in engineering from the U of U in 1969. He earned his Juris Doctorate by attending night law school while he worked for NIOSH in Cincinnati. During his career as a Public Health Service Officer, he was able to complete a Master of Science in Engineering degree at the University of Michigan (1979) and a Ph.D. in engineering at West Virginia University (1989). He is also a Registered Professional Engineer in Ohio, a Certified Professional Ergonomist, and a Certified Safety Professional. The American Society of Safety Engineers recently awarded him the First Place, 2007 Professional Paper Award for authoring Risk Reduction Strategies (Professional Safety, 52(1):24-30, 2007).

Roger lives in Butte, Montana with his wife of 33 years, Marian. Their daughter Lea completed an M.S. in Industrial Hygiene at Montana Tech and works in Portland as a Loss Control Consultant for Liberty Northwest Insurance.
medium and low levels of exposures to methamphetamine. Exposures were determined by algorithms primarily relying on police officers and 549 (13.91% of 3,946 eligible) firefighters.

This produced an average 15.5% among police and 19.6% among firefighters returned questionnaires due to incorrect addresses. Thus, there are some suggestions of elevated risks for lymphoma, melanoma and colon and rectal cancers among policymakers conducting methamphetamine-related tasks. There also are suggestions of elevated risks for all cancers combined among firefighters. These conclusions must be viewed cautiously based on the low participation rates.

Thus the results were unable to support legislation for presumptive coverage under workers compensation. The full report is available on-line at http://www.medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh.

Firefighters and police officers face unique exposures as part of their day to day work. A study was funded by the State of Utah to investigate the possible relationship between some of these exposures and cancers. A comprehensive literature review demonstrated there is not a single, published epidemiological study of risks for cancer among police officers from methamphetamine-related tasks. However, there are numerous epidemiological studies of firefighters with different findings among the various studies. The most common cancers generally found to have been elevated were: colon, rectal, Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, melanoma, and prostate cancer, although other studies found no relationship between the firefighting occupation and cancer.

We identified 144 municipalities or agencies for police officers and 29 agencies for firefighters. Of these, 70 (49%) and 27 (93.1%) respectively, agreed to participate. Most participating municipalities agreed to provide names of officers, but not addresses thus mailings of enrollment information and study identification numbers were sent out from the municipalities which in turn promised to mail the enrollment information. This produced an average 15.5% among police and 19.6% among firefighters returned questionnaires due to incorrect addresses.

This study enrolled 553 (5.30% of 10,429 eligible) police officers and 549 (13.91% of 3,946 eligible) firefighters. Exposures were determined by algorithms primarily relying on answers to several questions to categorize workers into high, medium and low levels of exposures to methamphetamine, laboratory and combustion products, respectively while blinded to health status. For purposes of worst case analyses, those who were deceased had largely absent exposure data and were included in the high risk category.

The police officers’ most frequent cancers reported and confirmed by the Utah Cancer Registry were prostate, non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma and rectal cancer. The overall cancer rate was increased in the medium methamphetamine exposure group and was non-statistically significantly elevated in the high exposure group. The firefighters’ most frequent cancer reported and confirmed by the Utah Cancer Registry was prostate. The overall cancer rate was increased in the medium combustion products exposure group (3.1-fold) and was non-statistically significantly elevated in the high exposure group (2.4-fold). Risk estimates were stronger among confirmed cases (8.5- and 4.2-fold respectively). Risks for individual cancers were unstable due to small numbers. Skin cancers were significantly elevated in both the high (4-fold) and medium (3.4-fold) categories.

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Debut of Book’s Third Edition

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- Planning health care responses to natural disasters, terrorism, and other mass casualty situations.
- Entrepreneurship: Implementing or expanding health and safety programs.
- Leadership—What works and what doesn’t.
- Health and productivity enhancement.
- Preparing for and providing health and safety legal testimony.

All other chapters have been revised and current references are provided. The text continues to emphasize the skills and techniques that have proven effective in designing, implementing, managing, and evaluating health and safety programs. Prior editions have been referred to as a “Pocket MBA”, and this edition retains the focus on useful information that will benefit anyone who is in charge of all or parts of health and safety programs. The book remains the primary text for the Center’s required graduate course, FPMD 6760, Health Care Administration—Management of Health and Safety Programs. The text is 130 pages longer than the prior edition, and, in view of the increased length and new material, the Rocky Mountain Center’s correspondence course has been approved by the University of Utah’s Department of Continuing Medical Education for 45 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. The correspondence course is also approved for 4.0 Continuing Education Units and 5.0 ABIH points. (Further information on the correspondence course may be found at: http://uhsc.utah.edu/rmcoeh/ContEdProg/Brochures/PAMGMT.pdf)

Upcoming Continuing Education Classes and Events

May Courses
- OSHA 503: Update for General Industry Outreach Trainers
- OSHA 501: Trainer Course in Occupational Safety and Health Standards for General Industry
- Environmental Issues & Regulations (Night Class)
- Asbestos Contractor/Supervisor Refresher
- Asbestos Worker Refresher (In Spanish)
- Asbestos Inspector Refresher (Green River, WY)

June Course
- OSHA 2225: Respiratory Protection
- OSHA 6000: Collateral Duty Course for Other Federal Agencies
- Air Monitoring for Toxic Substances
- Transportation of Dangerous Goods: Compliance with IATA
- International Air Transportation Association (IATA) Training
- Chemical Compatibility and Storage

July Courses
- OSHA 2045: Machinery and Machine Guarding Standards
- 8-Hour HAZWOPER Refresher
- Asbestos Inspector Management Planner Refresher
- DOT Hazardous Material Transportation
- Chemistry for the Non-Chemist
- Asbestos Worker Training in Spanish
- Hazardous Materials: Incident Command

August Courses
- Comprehensive Review of Industrial Hygiene
- Asbestos Inspector/Management Planner Refresher
- 40 Hour Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response Course (HAZWOPER)
- OSHA 500: Trainer Course in Occupational Safety and Health Standards for the Construction Industry

September Courses
- Asbestos Contractor/Supervisor Refresher (Pocatello)
- Core Concepts in Safety and Health (Night Class)
- CAOHC-Approved Occupational Hearing Conservation
- OSHA 2250: Principles of Ergonomics Applied to Work-Related Musculoskeletal & Nerve Disorders
- OSHA 511 Occupational Safety and Health Standards for General Industry

October Courses
- 26th Annual Conference on Safety and Industrial Outreach Trainers

November Courses
- Occupational Safety and Health (ONLINE)
- Respiratory Protection & Fit Testing
- Lead Supervisor/Contractor Training

December Courses
- OSHA 7300 Understanding OSHA’s Permit-Required Confined Space Standard
- Effective Safety Committees

For additional information on CE classes, please visit the continuing education section of the RMCOEH website: http://medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh/
To encourage resident participation in the activities of the Western Occupational Health Conference, the leadership of WOEMA and its Board of Directors, has set aside funding every year for resident scholarships (i.e., tuition fee waivers), stipends, and poster competitions.

It is with great pleasure to see residents from four of the five residency programs in the region eagerly participate at this year’s WOHC, September 17-20, 2008 in Napa, California. Dr. Anne Donohue and Dr. Nancy Williams from the OEM program at the U of U Rocky Mountain Center were both recipients of the scholarship and stipend. Dr. Nancy Williams’ poster was chosen as the first-prize winner in the competition.

Dr. Royce Moser Recognized

The RMCOEH received a letter from Joseph J. Angello, Jr., of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, to “recognize the contribution of a member of your faculty to a significant issue concerning both prevention and national defense”. In the mid-1980’s the Department of the Air Force began developing a computer program suitable for incorporation in advanced fighter aircraft that would automatically prevent the aircraft from hitting the ground if the pilot became distracted, disoriented or made an error in judgment. This technology was ready for production and incorporation into aircraft by the end of the last century, but Air Force leadership at that time rejected it.

Recently, the Aviation Safety Technology Working Group (ASTWG) of the Defense Safety Oversight Council championed Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance Technology (Auto-GCAS) as a technology needed in future aircraft: To sell their case, they sought to develop evidence suggesting to implement manual collision avoidance technology to reduce the loss rate of fighters to controlled flight into terrain (CFIT). A key reference was discovered supporting this fact. A paper written by Royce Moser, MD, MPH: ‘Spatial Disorientation as a Factor in Accidents in an Operational Command’ was published in Aviation Medicine, Vol 40, #2, pp174-176 in 1969. This paper contained information allowing the ASTWG to quantify loss rates in the late 1950s and early 1960s and prove that manual systems installed in the intervening years had no effect on reducing CFIT rates. The outcome has been that the USAF has now fully embraced Auto-GCAS and it will be installed in advanced fighter aircraft.

Mr. Angello said, “This decision will preserve hundreds of aircraft and lives over the next quarter of a century, it will prevent loss of 6% to 9% of the total purchase of the Joint Strike Fighter, saving the taxpayers billions of dollars”. Dr. Royce Moser’s paper was a significant influence in the success of this initiative.

Congratulations, Dr. Moser!

Brush Wellman Beryllium Mine

Occupational Medicine Residents Nancy Williams, MD, and Jessica Hanford, MD accompanied David Deubner, MD, MPH, Corporate Medical Director for Brush Wellman, Inc. on tours of the Brush Wellman Beryllium Mine in Delta, Utah in September 2008. The Brush Wellman Beryllium mine in Delta is one of only two active Beryllium mines in the world. Dr. Deubner, a long time supporter of RMCOEH, regularly invites residents and students to accompany him during his site visits to the facility.

RMCOEH EXPANDS

With the addition of our new MOH/MSOH master level programs, increasing class sizes and steady growth in research activity, the Rocky Mountain Center is pleased to have expanded our facility into adjacent space that recently became available in time for the new semester. With the additional of approximately 3,200 square feet, we have established a larger classroom able to accommodate up to 40 students, equipped with the latest in audiovisual and distance education tools. We have created additional lab space for our Occupational Injury and Prevention Research program, and look forward to future enhancements in our industrial hygiene laboratory. We are pleased to have improved functional space that will be afforded to our students, staff and faculty.

CALL FOR PILOT/SMALL RESEARCH PROJECTS IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

The Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health announces continued support of pilot/small research projects in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for 2009-2010. This Pilot/Small Projects Research Program is supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the RMCOEH. It is anticipated that four to six research projects will be funded at a level of approximately $5,000 to $10,000 per project. Projects are expected to be completed within 12 months, and are non-renewable. Research project applications must be submitted by May 15, 2009 with intent to notify successful investigators on July 1, 2009.

For complete program and application details, please watch for the official announcement on our website at http://www.medicine.utah.edu/rmcoeh/.
The faculty and research staff at the Rocky Mountain Center are pleased to be engaged as the principal researchers and authors of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM) Occupational Medicine Practice Guidelines, revised 2nd edition. Using enhanced methodology to identify and evaluate original research studies on nearly every conceivable work-related disorder, the RMCOEH team is at the heart of analyzing the available data and drafting practice recommendations which are then edited and peer reviewed by large, multi-disciplinary panels of healthcare professionals and subsequently by external professional organizations. The final product, published as the revised 2nd edition, is an unparalleled comprehensive effort to provide the strength of evidence in practice recommendations to restore or improve the health of workers with occupational injuries and illnesses. Distilled from over 2,000 moderate and high quality clinical trials, these newly enhanced practice methods are quickly identifying successful interventions that should be more widely adopted in medical practice, as well as highlighting other current practices and procedures that should be reserved or eliminated. Further, these guidelines are becoming widely adopted by other professional organizations and government organizations as the quality publication of choice to assist in the medical management of injured workers.

Dr. Kurt Hegmann serves as the Editor-in-Chief, for this colossal effort, working closely with RMCOEH Deputy Director, Matthew Hughes, MD, MPH. Faculty member Matt S. Thiese, PhD, MSPH manages the research team including identification of evidence and data management efforts. Hannah Edwards, MD, MPH, and Eric Wood, MD, MPH conduct analyses of the evidence and contribute to authorship. We have also enjoyed enormous support from the research team and students, including Ulrike Ott, Debra Robertson, Sivithee Sriskumbowornchais, MS, Deborah Gwenevere Passey, Cooper Kennedy, Riann Robbins, Atim Effiong, and Tessa Langley.

Revised guidelines have now been completed for disorders of the low back, elbow, and for the massive topic of chronic pain. Work is near completion for disorders of the hip and groin, hand wrist forearm, carpal tunnel syndrome, and foot and ankle. Work is underway for neck disorders and soon for the shoulder and knee. When asked how he copes with the tremendous task of the project as Editor in Chief, Dr. Hegmann responded “reading and grading the available evidence, followed by compilation of evidence tables and analysis of strength of evidence recommendations may sound tedious, but it is extremely exciting when the evidence paints a clear picture of best available practice, and that, when implemented, truly improves the health of the injured worker. The constant challenge is to re-learn that which is widely taught and in common practice, yet is just not the best clinical practice. I have seen this occur in my own practice in ways I had never imagined. Nothing can be more professionally satisfying than that!”