

## Refinery rate high for cancer

**United Press International**  
PORT ARTHUR — Medical detectives are planning further research into a preliminary National Cancer Institute study that suggests there are abnormally high brain, stomach and lung cancer rates at two big oil refineries.

A spokesman for NCI at Bethesda, Md., said statistics suggest workers at Texaco Inc. and Gulf Oil Corp. local facilities face unusually high cancer risks and that talks were under way to arrange studies with both companies.

The preliminary report was based on statistical examination of 1947-1977 records of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union and Texas death certificates, the spokesman said.

NCI studied the records of 3,105 deceased workers and examined statistics for five plants with more than 100 deaths each. The apparent high rates at Gulf and Texaco emerged from the preliminary inquiry.

At Texaco, researchers studied 475 white and non-white male death records and found five brain and central nervous system cancer deaths among whites with the union 10 years, a rate three times that expected for all deaths.

The study also showed five stomach cancer deaths among non-whites, again three times the expected rate for all deaths and twice that for deaths from all forms of cancer.

At Gulf, researchers studied 413 death certificates and 13 lung cancer deaths among non-white workers, triple the rate expected for all deaths and twice the rate expected from all cancers.

Both companies expressed concern but cautioned that the results were incomplete.

"Texaco points out that the National Cancer Institute study is not the final statement concerning fatal disease risk," said spokesman Larry Bingaman. "It is a preliminary or hypothesis-generating report and caution must be observed in interpreting the results of the analysis."

Gulf's Jim Catten said that "since the findings are preliminary and the sample size is small we are in agreement with the author that more in-depth studies are needed to evaluate the significance of the data."



### Grads to receive alumnus awards

Texas A&M University will honor four of its graduates with Distinguished Alumnus awards at spring commencement ceremonies today and Saturday. The honorees are from left: Robert H. Allen of Houston, Fred R. Brison of College Station, Bill W. Clayton of Spring Lake and H.C. Heldenfels of Corpus Christi.

### Rural areas suffer as result

## Country doc is disappearing

**United Press International**  
HELENA, Mont. — Concern is growing over the disappearance of the country doctor from the many rural communities of the West.

Physicians say he is becoming an endangered species.

State medical associations in places like Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Nevada find themselves diagnosing the problem, and admitting to no quick cure.

While doctors are attracted to larger cities or, for example, to Western Montana's scenic splendor, they tend to shun small, less-inviting communities.

"It's tough to practice in the boon docks," says Dr. James Cope, past president of the Montana Medical Association.

THE FORSYTH, Mont., physician, who established his practice in the Eastern Montana town 30 years ago following graduation from Western Reserve Medical School in his native Ohio, concedes that "this is not an ideal place."

"We have no skiing here, no shinning mountains, no trout streams and very little recreation," Cope says. "It's hot in the summer, cold in the winter."

Eastern Montana is sparsely populated over a 70,000 square mile

area. Even for the doctor who likes the countryside, he finds it hard to retain enough patients to support a practice in a region where the population is so scattered.

Cope and one other physician serve Forsyth, a town of fewer than 3,000 residents, not far from Colstrip, the hub of Montana's recent coal-boom area. There are no doctors and no hospital in Colstrip, which now is larger than Forsyth.

AS COPE NOTES, the problem is not numbers of physicians, of which the United States has no shortage. It's what he calls "maldistribution."

Dr. Robert St. John, president of the Montana Medical Association, uses the same term, adding, "We're actually looking at a physician exodus."

St. John is a gynecologist-obstetrician in his hometown of Butte, in Western Montana, where the mountains, trout streams, skiing, hunting and similar attractions apparently have helped to nearly double the number of physicians in that city in the past 10 years.

Robert G. Smith, executive director of the Wyoming State Medical Society, also points to what he calls the "distribution problem."

"Physicians are going to congregate where they are needed and

where they can practice their skills, specialists especially."

NEARLY 40 PERCENT of Wyoming's doctors are located in Cheyenne and Casper, that state's largest cities, Smith says.

Dr. Neil Swissman of Las Vegas, president of the Nevada State Medical Association, says his group "for years has been active in promoting practice opportunities for physicians in rural communities."

In Oregon, a report by Lee Lewis of the state Medical Association called attention to Oregon's "livability" as the primary reason for a growth in the statewide physician population. Lewis said it was "difficult to support the proposition that we have a great manpower shortage," but she too mentioned "some

problems with the distribution of medical manpower."

DIRECTOR DONALD SOWER of the Idaho Medical Association says that while the association has been relatively successful in placing doctors in many of Idaho's small communities in recent years, that has not been the case in "remote areas."

"I don't know if we're ever going to get them there," says Sower. Idaho has more than 1,000 physicians, but more than 200 are in the Boise area and nearly 400 others in and around Twin Falls, Idaho Falls, Pocatello and Coeur d'Alene.

Of Montana's estimated 1,000 doctors, about 220 practice in Billings, and another 300 are in Great Falls and Missoula, the state's three largest cities.

## Carson to keep 'Tonight Show'

**United Press International**  
HOLLYWOOD — Johnny Carson said it wasn't so — at least not this year.

"We're going to be here for a while," Carson said Wednesday night, reappearing as host of "The Tonight Show." He was absent for two weeks that were filled with reports of a struggle with NBC over his desire to quit two years before his contract expires, saying he is tired after 17 years in the job.

Carson, who usually draws the raw material for his humorous opening monologue from the headlines, made no exception for himself, referring to the present contract that requires him to work only three nights a week.

"People have asked me a lot of questions; the same question keeps coming back.

"Last night I was asked, 'Can't you do it more than three times a week?'"

"And I said, 'Joanna, I'm taking the vitamin E, I'm trying the best I can.'"

After a string of such jokes about himself and the network, Carson — believed to be the most valuable single performer on television — got serious.

"Originally, I had intended to leave at the end of our 17th year, which would have been Oct. 1," Carson said.

"I intend to stay past that time," he announced, drawing wild applause.

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