



March 26, 2010

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Health Hazard Evaluation Announced

Kansas City, Mo. –At the request of the U.S. General Services Administration Heartland Region 6, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has initiated a Health Hazard Evaluation at the GSA offices located at 1500 E. Bannister Road, on behalf of GSA employees and tenants that work in these spaces.

GSA Heartland Region 6 officials requested the evaluation in response to the possibility of health concerns of former and current GSA employees and tenants that occupy space on the west side of the federal complex. “Our priority is people, “ said Jason Klumb, who was recently appointed Regional Administrator of the Heartland Region and will be sworn in March 30. “We are committed to providing a healthy work place and believe that a NIOSH Health Hazard Evaluation is currently the best way to determine whether a need exists for further investigation or study of the GSA-controlled space.”

NIOSH, a division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is in the initial phase of conducting an evaluation of GSA-controlled space at the Bannister Federal Complex. The information gathering process will help NIOSH determine if a site visit is needed to assess conditions of the workplace, according to Dr. Carlos Aristeguieta, NIOSH Medical Officer in charge of the health hazard evaluation.

“The process we follow at NIOSH is to discuss the severity and extent of the problem, our experience with similar problems, the availability of written materials that address the concerns, and whether we believe a field evaluation by NIOSH would be helpful in addressing concerns,” said Dr. Aristeguieta.

NIOSH will make recommendations about next steps for the GSA-controlled spaces at the Bannister Complex by early June. Next steps could include a more in-depth cross section epidemiological study (a six-12 month process), recommendation for further environmental sampling and health monitoring, or no further action.

As part of its process, NIOSH will conduct an environmental assessment that includes a review of all completed environmental sampling, the analysis of the results and a comparison to

occupational exposure in other settings and available national standards. -

In addition, NIOSH will also perform a medical surveillance assessment that includes a review of both formal and anecdotal health concerns raised by GSA employees and tenants and historical health information from Occupational Safety and Health Administration logs from the past five years.

GSA employees and tenants have been encouraged to present their individual health concerns to a NIOSH medical officer. NIOSH has assured GSA employees and tenants that their health information will be confidential and not released to their employers in any form that may identify them. GSA estimates that about 1,022 employees and tenants could participate in the evaluation.

The GSA Heartland Region manages more than 400 federally owned buildings in Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska. GSA employees provide such products and services as office space, equipment and supplies, telecommunications, information technology, emergency preparedness and continuity of operations planning.

NIOSH is part of the CDC, which is an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. NIOSH provides leadership in preventing work-related illness, injury, disability and death. NIOSH gathers information, conducts scientific research and translates this knowledge into products, services and recommendations for improving workplace safety and health.

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