

NSB mayor unhappy with report on radiation testing

North Slope Borough Mayor George Ahmaogak, Sr., has expressed disappointment with a recent federal report on 1950's radiation testing of North Slope Natives. The National Research Council conducted the analysis at the request of Congress and concluded that, although the Natives who participated were not

informed the pills they swallowed contained radioactive iodine, no real harm was done as a result of the experiments.

"They didn't come to the North Slope and examine any of the victims who are still living," said Mayor Ahmaogak. "All they did was run some numbers and decide that nobody was harmed."

The report indicated that thyroid cancer is very rare and the dosage received by test subjects was unlikely to have caused any new cancer cases. But while the report downplayed the harm to test subjects, it also acknowledged the dangers of using Iodine 131 in human experiments.

• Radiation report



"They say the radiation didn't do any harm," said Ahmaogak. "But then they admit Iodine 131 isn't used anymore because it sends a lot of radiation to the thyroid gland. They also admit it was dangerous to use children and breastfeeding women as subjects. They seem to be talking out of both sides of their mouths."

Ahmaogak said the report's recommendations do not address the real needs or concerns of people who were used in the experiments.

"That's why we're doing our own medical investigation. It looks like we'll have to do the work they weren't willing to do in order to get conclusions that are based on medicine, not arithmetic."

The Borough recently contracted with the law firm of Birch, Horton, Bittner and Cherot to conduct an investigation into how this experiment was allowed to happen and to conduct a medical investigation of the consequences of the Iodine 131 experiments.