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Subject: 'Boy's Cancer Blamed on Millstone' (Hartford Courant)

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Boy's Cancer Blamed On Millstone
Mom's Exposure To Chemicals Alleged
By THOMAS D. WILLIAMS
Courant Staff Writer

March 11 2005

NIANTIC -- Seven-year-old Zachery M. Hartley has a rare, disfiguring cancer of the jaw. His parents and an internationally known physician blame the Millstone nuclear power plant.

Dr. Helen Caldicott, a co-founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, said Thursday that it is likely the rare disorder afflicted Zachery because his mother swam in the ocean near the nuclear plant during her pregnancy.

At a bayside press conference, Caldicott said Tonia Hartley came in contact with radiological compounds discharged from the plant into Niantic bay.

Michael and Tonia Hartley and a state anti-nuclear group are demanding that Millstone be shut down and that swimming in the bay be prohibited.

Although Millstone was closed at the time in 1997 when Tonia Hartley went swimming, Caldicott said, the plant was "washing out with volatiles [chemicals] and that had a synergistic effect" making the water emissions extremely hazardous. She said anyone swimming in the bay then could have been exposed to the chemicals by swallowing or breathing them, absorbing them through the skin or eating contaminated fish from the bay.

But, Peter Hyde, spokesman for Dominion Nuclear Connecticut Inc., the plant's operator, said: "We've looked at this and we empathize a great deal with this boy and his family. But we don't agree that there is any evidence that Millstone caused this boy's cancer. We live here. We swim in this water. We would never do anything consciously to cause harm to our families or neighbors."

Hyde said Caldicott did not say she could definitively link the cancer to the plant's emissions.

Invited to the press conference by the Connecticut Coalition Against Millstone, Caldicott said 17 to 19 similar occurrences of rare cancers have been reported among people living in the vicinity of Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, N.Y.

Brookhaven, begun in 1947 as a nuclear-science research center, conducts research in the physical, biomedical, and environmental sciences, as well as in energy technologies and national security for the U.S. Department of Energy.

The Hartleys did not fully link Tonia Hartley's swimming to her son's cancer until January while viewing a public television broadcast of the coalition opposing Millstone's pending re-licensing application, said Nancy Burton, a coalition leader.

Tonia Hartley, who swam regularly for seven months while she was pregnant, was in Boston Thursday readying for Zachery's next major operation, but sent a tape recording of her comments to the conference.

"Connecticut is not looking out for its children," she said. "There were no signs posted on the beach by the state, the town or the federal government that swimming in the water could be hazardous to my unborn child.

"I'm sharing our story as a mother looking out for the community so the community can make an educated decision knowing the price we paid for being unaware. This has been a nightmare for my family for seven years and it is continuing to be a nightmare for the rest of Zachery's life," she said.

As his son stood by, Michael Hartley said he and his wife decided to go public because "no one in town has said anything about this, and if they know they are not talking. I want the public to vote on it," he said.

An advocate of citizen action to remedy the nuclear and environmental crises, Caldicott, 66, has spent the past 35 years on an international campaign to educate the public about the medical hazards of the nuclear industry.
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