

# CARD News

Center for Asbestos Related Disease

WINTER 2011

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## **Building Update:**

The New Year has brought new space to provide healthcare services and research activities to patients!

[CARD has moved into our newly constructed half of the building!](#)

We would like to thank you for your patience as construction will now focus on the old half of the building.

[The completion of the upstairs addition and remodeling is in sight!](#)

## **CARD Welcomes Nurse Practitioner**

The Center for Asbestos Related Disease is pleased to announce the hiring of a licensed family nurse practitioner Michelle Boltz. Michelle comes to us from Alaska where she has spent the last four years developing her skills delivering a full spectrum of family practice patient care. Michelle however is no stranger to Libby and has family ties that run generations deep. Michelle is a Libby native who is part of a four generation family of nurses. Mrs. Boltz was a graduate of Libby High School before attending Washington State University where she received her bachelor and masters degree in nursing with high honors.

CARD's need for another practitioner to provide asbestos health screenings, and asbestos related disease health management services, combined with Michelle desire to move "home" with her husband and 2 young children makes this an opportunity that excites and delights all. She expressed clearly that her, and her husband, who both have ties to Lincoln County are at a time in their lives where they would like their children to develop a connection to Northwestern Montana. Michelle's education, work experience and community minded approach to medicine is what has Dr. Black and the rest of the CARD's staff eagerly awaiting her February 1<sup>st</sup> arrival.



Dr. Black eagerly anticipates working very closely with Michelle upon her arrival to further her understanding of pulmonary medicine, and of course specifically asbestos related disease. When she was asked why she chose CARD as her next stop in her professional career, after accepting the position she said directly, "I look forward to being a part of the multidisciplinary collaborative efforts of the CARD team and the entire community to ensure that the highest caliber of medical care for asbestos related disease is accessible, sustainable, and meaningful." Michelle will not only be a tremendous asset to CARD, but to the community of Libby as a whole.

Please join us in welcoming Michelle Boltz to CARD and our community!

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## LERP Call for Recruitment—Autoimmune Project

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Occupational and environmental impacts on auto immunity have been a significant public health concern. Although there are genetic factors that affect development of some autoimmune diseases in certain individuals, population studies have shown an association between exposure to airborne particles (like asbestos) that may trigger or accelerate an autoimmune response.

Asbestos exposure is associated with various lung conditions, including fibrosis (lung scarring), pleural plaques, and cancer. Although the exact mechanisms leading to the progression of these conditions have not been fully explained, there is evidence that some of the lung abnormalities seen in asbestos related diseases (ARD) are caused by the body's own immune response. However, much more research is needed to determine the mechanisms linking exposure to asbestos and the development of an autoimmune disease such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus.

Here is how it works. Inside your body there is an amazing protection mechanism called the **immune system**. It is designed to defend you against millions of bacteria, viruses, toxins and parasites that would love to invade your body. Through a series of steps called the immune response, the immune system attacks organisms and substances that invade body systems and cause disease. When antigens (foreign substances) are detected, several types of cells work together to recognize these "invaders" and respond. These "protector" cells trigger other cells to produce antibodies. **Antibodies** (also known as **immunoglobulins**) are proteins that are found in blood or other bodily fluids and are used by the immune system to identify and neutralize foreign invaders. They are our body's "warriors". An **autoantibody** is an antibody (warrior) manufactured by our own immune system that attacks our own body and cells rather than fighting the "invaders". These autoantibodies are cells that are confused and wage war on our own system. There is a specific blood test, called an **ANA test**, that can measure the autoantibodies in our body. **ANAs (Anti-nuclear antibodies)** are autoantibodies that attack your own cells. They are present in higher than normal numbers in autoimmune disease. The ANA test measures the pattern and amount of autoantibody which can attack the body's tissues. Autoantibodies are present in low numbers in the general population, but their concentration is increased if you have an autoimmune disease. Through the Libby Epidemiological Research Project (LERP) which is lead by Dr. Steve Levin from (Mount Sinai School of Environmental & Occupational Medicine in New York) and Dr. Jean Pfau (Idaho State University) who will be conducting the research, CARD will be looking at the association of autoimmune disease and ARD.

CARD will be asking patients to voluntarily give a blood sample if they are interested in participating the project. People who have known autoimmune disease and those that do not are all invited to take part. In order to participate in any research project, individuals must sign a consent that explains the project purpose including the risks and benefits of taking part. All research is voluntary and it will not affect your services from CARD in any way. If you are interested in this project, you can call Jennifer @ 406-293-9274 ext. 23. The LERP project is a 5 year research project funded by Agency for Toxic Disease and Substance Registry (ATSDR).



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## Groundwork Required to Get Grants Funded

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Kent State, the University of New York at Buffalo, and CARD are in the process of applying for a grant to develop a patient education and disease management program specific to Libby asbestos related diseases. But before we can submit the grant (to compete for funding to do the project) we need to do a little ground work. If you live in the Libby/Troy area and think you might be interested in spending a few hours helping out with the early groundwork, contact Tanis 293-9274 extension 29 or Jennifer at extension 23 to find out more.

## Important: Changing Asbestos Health Benefits in 2011

We all know that we have gone through many different asbestos health benefit programs in the last 10 years. Currently LAMP II and FLASH provide comprehensive ARD health benefits for diagnosed individuals. Because these programs are grant funded, they will be ending at some point in 2011, and the new long term asbestos health programs will be in place.

In 2010, legislation was passed to establish long term health programs in response to public health emergencies, such as the asbestos exposure that occurred in our community. There are three parts to this legislation 1) ongoing screening programs via grant funding, 2) traditional Medicare benefits and 3) establishment of a “pilot program.”

1) Ongoing asbestos health screening will be provided through a competitive grant process. Once the grant announcement is released, CARD will submit a proposal to continue screening for the time period specified in the grant.

2) Traditional Medicare benefits including Part A –inpatient services, Part B-out patient services, and Part D –prescription benefits (just like everyone gets when they turn 65) is available for eligible individuals. An eligible individual must prove they lived in Lincoln County for 6 months at least 10 years before they were diagnosed with an asbestos related disease.

3) At this point we cannot tell you what the “pilot program” will look like as the Center for Medicare Services (CMS) is currently developing it. The pilot program will not be the same as FLASH and enrollment will not be automatic as it was when people on LAMP were seamlessly rolled over onto FLASH. What we do know now is: 1) An application will have to be completed to get on the “pilot program” and 2) Eligibility criteria and the health benefits for this plan are still being defined by CMS.

### **The Bottom Line at this time:**

- CARD will be there to help everyone through the transition as we have in the past.
- Medicare benefits combined with the “pilot program” will replace LAMP II and FLASH.
- Medicare and the Pilot program will not be exactly like FLASH and LAMP
- It is important to stay aware as the new benefits are being developed: we are hopeful that there will be a community meeting so we can give input to CMS from the community.
- CARD will do our best to keep you informed through CARD Newsletter as things progress.
- Be ready to do something in order to get the benefits you are entitled to have. CARD can not do it alone; we will need your involvement!



## “Keepsake Cooking” Update

As you may recall, the CARD Foundation recently collected recipes from you, the friends of CARD. We had an overwhelming response, and are excited to produce this one of a kind cookbook! The books will be available mid-April, for \$18.00 (\$15.00 pre-ordered). Several retailers in Libby will be selling the cookbooks, including: Cabinet Books and Music, Libby Drug, Mountain Meadows, and the Libby Area Chamber of Commerce. You can also order via [www.donatelibbyasbestos.org](http://www.donatelibbyasbestos.org). Official availability will be announced in the Spring Newsletter. If you have any questions contact Betty Jo Wood at 293-9274 x32. Let's get cooking for CARD!

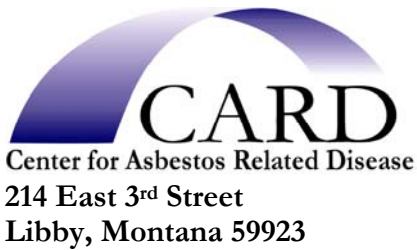
### **Keepsake Cooking PRE-ORDER FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ cookbook

*If you'd like to pre-order a cookbook please fill out this handy form and send it to CARD!*



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## **Nitty Gritty Dirt Band to Play for CARD Benefit**

The CARD Foundation is excited to announce its first annual fundraising concert to benefit the Center for Asbestos Related Disease (CARD). The Internationally known country rock headliners, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and widely known local group, The Copper Mountain band, will be performing in Libby on Saturday, July 9, 2011 at 8pm at the J. Neils soccer fields.

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band formed in Southern California in the mid-1960's as a scruffy, young, hippy, jug-band. Over four decades later, the quartet is still going strong, regarded as pioneers of country rock. Over the years, the Dirt Band has produced many hits putting them at the top of the country charts, including: "Dance Little Jean", "Baby's Got a Hold on Me", "Fishin' in the Dark", "I've Been Lookin'," and many more.

Troy natives, The Copper Mountain Band, will be opening the show for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, as well as playing a dance following the show. Over the past several years The Copper Mountain Band has played all over the Rocky Mountain Region, entertaining audiences with their high-energy music.

Tickets will be available April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011, online and at various local retailers (to be announced). Cost will be \$20.00 advance purchase and \$25.00 at the gate.

All proceeds from this event will go to the CARD Foundation, the fundraising arm of CARD, which support CARD in its ongoing efforts to provide healthcare, research and outreach to benefit all people impacted by exposure to Libby Amphibole Asbestos.

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