



CARD NEWS

Center for Asbestos Related Disease

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Center for Disease Control (CDC) Funded CARD Screening

CARD Screening

Who is eligible for CARD Screening?
To be eligible for CDC funded CARD Screening, you must have lived, worked or recreated in the Libby area, prior to the year 2015, for at least 6 months (and this does not need to be consecutive). It also must have been at least 10 years since your first potential exposure to asbestos in the Libby area. The reason that it must have been at least 10 years ago is because asbestos related diseases have a 10-40 year latency (delay) period before any evidence of disease presents.

How do I get signed up?

If you think you meet the eligibility criteria to receive CARD Screening services, simply call CARD or come in to the clinic and fill out a CARD Screening Application. Your eligibility will be verified at that time and you will be scheduled for an appointment.

What does the screening involve?

CARD Screening involves collection of information related to your asbestos exposure, current health status and health history. A chest x-ray will be done to look at your lungs. A complete breathing test (pulmonary function test) will be done to see how your lungs are functioning. A CARD screening physician will then evaluate all of your information, and then your case manager will go over the results with you. If you are over the age of 50, a fecal occult

blood test will be offered to you to screen for colon cancer as it is considered an asbestos related condition. If the screening physician identifies any suggestive symptoms or suggestive abnormalities on your chest x-ray you will be offered further diagnostic testing. This would include a chest CT scan and a face-to-face visit with the screening physician.

Based on your individual situation, an individual asbestos healthcare plan will be developed for you. This will include any referrals or further healthcare treatment you may need, as well as a plan for when you should next be screened for asbestos related changes and lung cancer. Remember, that asbestos related diseases have a 10-40 year latency period. This means that asbestos related healthcare issues can present many years later, even if you have had previous screenings that were normal. Ongoing asbestos screening is an important part of managing your overall health.

All chest x-rays will be sent out to two B-readers. B-readers are individuals who have been trained to read chest x-rays using a standardized method to identify lung abnormalities related to dust exposure. If you had a chest CT done it will be sent out to an expert CT reader. If the CT reader or 2 B-readers agree that they have identified lung abnormalities related to asbestos exposure, you would be eligible for FLASH (Federal Libby Asbestos Specialty Healthcare) benefits. If the 2 B-readers have different opinion, one yes and one no, then it will be sent to a 3rd B-reader to determine the final outcome.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens CAN CHANGE THE WORLD.

**Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
~Margaret Mead**



Flu Season, H1N1 Virus & You

It's officially "Flu" season. Usually, this means that only the seasonal influenza is upon us. However, this year we are facing an additional flu crisis. The novel H1N1 influenza A virus, initially called Swine flu, is infecting people nationwide.

CDC studies show that the people typically affected worst by the H1N1 virus are those younger than 25 years old. Very few deaths have been reported in people older than 64, one reason being that about one-third of adults older than 60 may have the antibodies (protein molecules that serve as the body's primary immune defense) against the virus. However, it is not known whether that antibody provides complete protection from the virus. If a person is pregnant, has diabetes, asthma, heart disease, suppressed immune system, neuromuscular or kidney disease they are at "high risk" for experiencing complications related to the H1N1 virus, and should seek medical attention when symptoms arise.

All influenza viruses infect the upper respiratory tract to some degree. Symptoms of the H1N1 virus include: cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, fever, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. There have been reports of vomiting and diarrhea associated with exposure to the virus, and in some cases even death.

Since the novel H1N1 is, in fact, a virus, the precautions we take to avoid contracting it are essentially the same as any other virus. This means washing our hands or using alcohol-based hand rubs, covering our mouths when we cough or sneeze, avoiding close contact with sick people, and staying home if you are sick. The CDC recommends that, when sick with any virus, you stay home, except to get medical care, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone to avoid spreading it. Influenza virus can remain alive for 2-8 hours after being deposited on any surface. If you are infected it is possible to spread seasonal flu and novel H1N1 virus anywhere from 1 day before getting sick to 5-7 days after. Germs/viruses spread by a person touching something contaminated, not washing their hands, and then touching their own eyes, nose, or mouth. So keep your hands away from your face, and keep things clean!

It is recommended that providers vaccinate all of the following people as first priority: pregnant women, persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months, healthcare personnel, children and young adults aged 6 months--4 years, and persons aged 5-18 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications. CARD is not a provider of the H1N1 vaccine. H1N1 vaccination clinics will be taking place on the following dates: November 19th and December 9th at the Libby Senior Center, and November 18th at the Troy Senior Center. For more information regarding H1N1 or seasonal flu vaccinations please call the County Health Department at 293-2660.

CDC Funded CARD Screening

(continued from page 1)

Will the CARD Screening visit cost me anything?

If you have been approved to receive CARD Screening services, then the cost of your screening visit will be paid for by the CDC screening funds for the duration of this grant funded project. It will cover the entire cost of your visit.

If I can't travel to Libby are there any other Libby asbestos screening options?

The CDC fund is only available to those who are seen at CARD in Libby. However, there is another plan, called LAMP (Libby Asbestos Medical Plan), which can be used for asbestos screening anywhere in the country. If you would like to know more about this plan, please contact LAMP at 1-877-889-8405 or contact the long distance screening department at CARD for assistance.

Who do I contact for more information about CARD Screening?

You can contact CARD at (406) 293-9274, then press zero to speak with the receptionist. The receptionist will help determine the nature of your questions and who you should speak with.



FLASH (Federal Libby Asbestos Specialty Healthcare) Benefits

Who is eligible for FLASH benefits?

Those who have been diagnosed with an asbestos related disease and who have a lung abnormalities on chest x-ray or chest CT, identified by either 2 B-readers or an expert CT reader, respectively, are eligible for FLASH benefits.

In addition, people who have met the 6 month exposure criteria, the 10 year latency criteria and who have an asbestos related cancer are also eligible for FLASH benefits even if they do not have a lung abnormality. The asbestos related cancer must be confirmed by histopathology, which are tests that your doctor orders. Recognized asbestos related cancers include: mesothelioma, and cancers of the lungs, larynx, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, colorectum, and ovaries.

How do I apply for FLASH benefits?

If you meet the eligibility requirements, there are several ways to get signed up for FLASH benefits.

If you completed CARD Screening the CARD team will assist you in filling out the proper application and in providing the necessary medical documentation.

If you have a Grace Libby Medical Plan card you can contact FLASH directly and request an application to get signed up.

If you participated in the 2000-2001 asbestos screening in Libby, conducted by ATSDR (Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry), and had 2 out of the 3 B-readers identify lung abnormalities, you are eligible for FLASH benefits. You can contact FLASH directly and request an application to submit, but you will also need to

provide the two B-reader reports that identify your asbestos related lung abnormalities.

If you are diagnosed with an asbestos related cancer and meet the exposure and latency eligibility requirements, you can contact FLASH directly and request an application to submit, but you will also need to provide the histology report confirming the cancer diagnosis.

Does anyone automatically get enrolled in FLASH benefits?

Yes, anyone who has LAMP Supplemental benefits will be notified by letter that they are enrolled in FLASH benefits. You will just be asked to complete a quick questionnaire regarding what other insurance benefits you have. Then you will receive a FLASH Supplemental Benefits card and plan document.

What coverage is offered by the FLASH benefits?

FLASH benefits are intended to be the ideal medical plan that will cover all asbestos related conditions which are currently recognized by the medical literature as associated with asbestos exposure. This does include treatment of the asbestos related cancers. For a complete description of what is covered, request a FLASH plan document.

How do FLASH benefits work?

Once you are enrolled in the FLASH program, you will receive a FLASH Supplement Benefits card and a plan document in the mail. Then you show your FLASH benefits card to your medical providers, and your pharmacy, so they can submit your asbestos related healthcare bills to FLASH after they have been submitted to any other insurance that you have.

Do I have to use my other insurance first?

Yes. FLASH is the payer of last resort. This means that your asbestos related

healthcare services must first be billed to your other insurances. Then any deductibles, co-pays, 20%, etc. could be submitted to FLASH. The goal is that it should not cost you anything at all to receive asbestos related healthcare.

What if I don't have any other insurance?

If you do not have any other insurance, all of your asbestos related healthcare services covered by the plan can be sent directly to FLASH for payment. However, all non-asbestos related healthcare services will not be covered.

Who do I contact for more information or if I have questions about FLASH?

For more information and any questions about FLASH, contact Kai Ellen Bucher at 1-406-751-3335 or Kelly Toren at 1-406-751-3343.

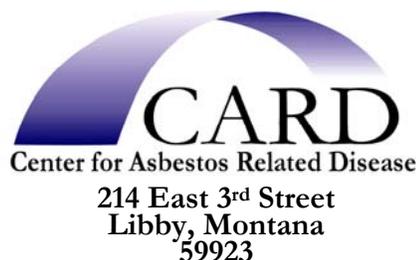
What if I already have Grace Libby Medical Plan benefits (Grace card) that is administered by HNA (Health Network of America) also known as Triveris?

You will still have Grace Libby Medical Plan benefits, and they can be billed first for your asbestos healthcare services. If it is denied or if there is a remaining balance due, it should then be billed to any other insurance you have and after that any balance that remains for asbestos related healthcare services can be billed to the FLASH program.

THE FUTURE

If this funding is only for two years, what happens after that?

Senator Baucus and Senator Tester are working to find a long-term funding mechanism that would keep these programs going into the future. At this point there is no guarantee, so it is important for the community to continue to speak with one united and loud voice that long-term asbestos screening and healthcare is still one of our top priorities!



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THE BIG CARD NEWS Fall 2009

Mount Sinai & CARD Collaborate on Research

CARD has partnered with investigators from Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York, U of M and Idaho State University to launch the *Libby Epidemiology Research Program*. This research is supported by a \$4.8 million grant over the next five years from ATSDR a federal branch of CDC. The Principal Investigator (PI) is Dr. Stephen Levin, a nationally known expert in occupational medicine and asbestos-related diseases. Dr. Levin has served as Medical Director of the Mount Sinai Center for Occupational & Environmental Medicine since 1987 and as PI of the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring & Treatment Program since 2002. He has worked closely with CARD's clinical and research initiatives in Libby since 2001.

Clinical observations supported by earlier medical findings point to critical health concerns, which this research hopes to investigate and document further. Evidence shows that even relatively low-level exposures to Libby asbestos can cause serious lung disease and cancers. The first of these projects will focus on risks of exposures during childhood, when the lung is still developing and maturing. Information from this research will be useful in identifying a safe level of exposure that will not pose a public health risk to residents, especially children. The second focus is to address the progression of lung scarring as seen on CT scans which is more rapid in the Libby population than found among workers exposed to commercial forms of asbestos. If an accelerated progression rate is demonstrated among the Libby population, opportunities to investigate the reasons for this more aggressive biological effect may prove fruitful in discovering the mechanism for asbestos-related scarring and approaches to prevent scarring formation after exposure has occurred. Lastly, previous observations that auto-immune disorders (ex. rheumatoid arthritis and lupus) occur more frequently among the Libby population than among other groups so the third research project will focus on the relationships among auto-immune disorders and auto-immune blood markers related to degree of exposure and disease development from the Libby amphibole asbestos. Dr. Levin points out that "the asbestos-related disease in Libby is far more aggressive with high rates of cancers and severe effects on respiratory function. For that reason alone, the health problems in Libby are important to study and understand." The success of CARD research continues to depend on the strong support of the patients, medical providers and Libby community at large. **BE A PART OF DISCOVERY** ask the CARD healthcare team how you can be involved.