



# CARD NEWS

Center for Asbestos Related Disease

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**Although There Is A Lot Of Exciting Research News In This Edition... Providing Excellent Healthcare To People Is ALWAYS The #1 Priority At CARD!**

**Working Together Towards Treatments!**

Tanis Hernandez, MSW  
CARD Social Worker

In August CARD hosted the NIEHS/ATSDR Scientific Meeting in Libby. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) brought agency directors and experienced doctors to further understand Libby Amphibole Asbestos Disease.

Dr. Black, Dr. Whitehouse, and the Scientific Advisory Group explained through case examples the different exposures, symptoms, and types of disease people experience related to Libby Amphibole Asbestos. All institutions agreed that Libby could be the core of some very beneficial research aimed at understanding the health effects of Libby Amphibole Asbestos and to work towards new therapies, treatments and cures.

There was great interest in assisting CARD to further develop research efforts. Because CARD has always focused on patient care as the number one priority, one of the important first steps to further research is the development of a strong scientifically based research infrastructure. We were reminded again how important it is to have

oversight from a Scientific Advisory Group and CARD is lucky to have this already established. In addition, all researchers at the meeting recognized that maintaining community oversight and involvement in Libby Amphibole Asbestos research is very important to the people of Libby and CARD.

CARD and the Scientific Advisory Group have started to put together a cooperative research proposal that will transition these ideas into reality. Karmanos Cancer Institute affiliated with Wayne State University has taken the lead in putting together a multi-institutional team to focus on targeted therapies that have great potential to truly benefit people living with ARD. CARD will be the clinical core of 4-6 major projects that are being done by multiple institutions and university teams. Collaborating universities include: Wayne State University, The University of Vermont, The University of Cincinnati, New York University, and Mount Sinai School of Medicine. The dedicated team is working together to submit the proposal by the upcoming fall deadline. Grants will be awarded in July of 2007.

The CARD has never been more excited and optimistic for research that will lead towards meaningful outcomes for people!

## W. R. Grace Trial Is Delayed

Cheryl Roediger

CARD Administrative Assistant

The criminal trial against W.R. Grace scheduled to begin on Sept 11, 2006 has now been postponed to the fall of 2007. In pre-trial hearings some important evidence was thrown out by the judge. The attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice, who represent the "people", want this important evidence to be included in the case. The judge agreed to delay the start of the trial pending a decision from the 9<sup>th</sup> US Circuit Court of Appeals.

People who have lived in the Libby area, been exposed to

Libby Amphibole Asbestos, or are sick with asbestos related disease can still register as a victim for this case. You can register by completing a simple form available at CARD, the EPA Information Center on Mineral Ave. in Libby or by contacting Sheryl Nordahl at the Department of Justice in Missoula at 406-542-8851 (press 1, then 3). You will be kept informed about the trial and may be compensated **IF** W.R. Grace is found guilty of any wrong-doing and **IF** it is awarded.

Remember that CARD is a healthcare facility providing medical services to people impacted by Libby amphibole asbestos. CARD is not directly involved in this case and does not provide legal services or advice.

### ARD NET Volunteer Services

The Asbestos Related Disease Network (ARD NET) is working on developing a new service for Libby residents diagnosed with ARD. Due to a demand for assistance with chores and activities at home, ARD NET will soon begin providing volunteers to help meet some of these needs. Volunteers will be available to help with many household chores such as yard work, cleaning, and shopping. If you are interested in receiving volunteer assistance, being a volunteer, or just have questions, call Megan at ARD NET, 293-4600.

### Flu and Pneumonia Vaccines

It's that time of the year again! The flu and pneumonia season is just around the corner. Flu shots once a year and pneumonia every 5-6 yrs. Vaccines are covered by HNA and Medicare.



## 30th Annual Great American Smokeout!

November 16<sup>th</sup> is the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Great American Smokeout! All across the nation and in Libby, Montana people will be putting cigarettes out for the day with hopes of quitting forever.

It is recognized that quitting tobacco is no easy task. Being committed and truly motivated to quit is the 1<sup>st</sup> and most important step. Then there are many products over the counter, and prescription, to help curb those nicotine cravings.

There is currently a new medication on the market called *Chantix* that actually blocks the nicotine receptor sites in your body so no benefits are experienced from using tobacco. This is a new approach to help people quit, but the person must be committed to quitting because medication alone won't

help to overcome the social and emotional reasons for using tobacco. Other strategies are needed to address these important components. If you are interested in this new medication talk with your medical provider.

If you're a member of the Grace Libby Medical Program they will cover all smoking cessation products through their prescription benefit. The Montana Tobacco Quit Line (1-866-485-QUIT) is available to any Montana residents and offers free; patches, gum, and phone counseling.

There are many health benefits to quitting. For people with lung disease it is important to note that in just 8 hours the oxygen and carbon monoxide level in your blood will return to normal and lung functions will start to improve in a couple months.

## Chest Pain & Asbestos Related Disease

Dr. Brad Black

CARD Medical Director

Chest pain has a number of causes which can include heart disease, gastroesophageal disease (such as reflux or esophageal spasms), chest infections, pulmonary embolus (blood clot to lung), and musculoskeletal pain (pulled muscles or broken bones).

Chest pain is also one of the common symptoms of asbestos related disease due to Libby amphibole asbestos, something that is not reported with disease caused by chrysotile (commercial) asbestos. Chest pain has been a frequently reported symptom in those exposed to crocidolite asbestos (Wittenoom, Australia), and this asbestos is in the same amphibole family as Libby asbestos.

Chest pain may be described as sharp stabs, burning sensation, pressure, tightness, or a dull ache. Don't ignore any of these symptoms because they may signal a serious heart condition. Seek medical attention immediately if pain comes on rapidly, severely, or is different from your "usual" chest pain.

The pleura is the lining that surrounds our lungs. It is very sensitive to pain because there are many nerve endings in this lining. Pain can be located anywhere in the chest where pleural scarring has occurred. It can be in the front of the chest, on the sides, or in the back. Its onset may be gradual (over days or weeks) or sudden, with intensity

anywhere from mild to severe. Difficulty breathing or pain when taking a deep breath can also be related.

Pleural pain can be caused by inflammation (which is swelling) that results from your body continuing to react to the fibers or the scarring that is already present. Pleural pain can also be brought on from vigorous activities or by certain movements of the upper body which lead to physical irritation of the existing scarring.

**Being open and honest with your health care provider is important so they can assist you in effectively managing your pain.**

**They don't know if you don't tell them!**

There are some things you can do to ease chest discomfort. Avoid certain activities that may increase your chest pain. Splinting can also be helpful for situations such as needing to cough. To splint, place a pillow or rolled up towel firmly against the pain on your chest and hold it there when you cough. This allows control of chest wall movement and may alleviate some pain. Heat may provide some relief; however, it does not decrease inflammation.

Medications are available to reduce inflammation. These include: inhaled corticosteroids such as Advair and Asmanex; Kenalog injections and oral Prednisone. Use of rescue medications such as Albuterol and Combivent are essential in reducing shortness of breath, and being

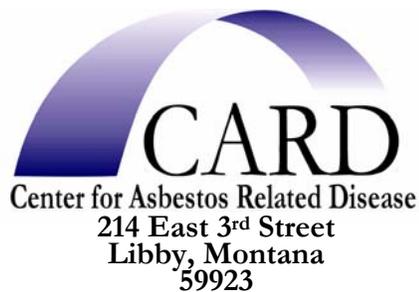
proactive with these meds (taking them before you become short of breath) can make strenuous activities more comfortable. Pain medications are also useful in managing pain if the above medications are not successful alone. There are many different kinds and strengths of pain medication. Working with your medical provider will help you sort out what medication plan is best for your individual situation.

Preventing lung infection is essential with a lung disease because infections will increase airway inflammation causing an increase in shortness of breath, cough, and sputum production. These can result in an increase in chest discomfort. Thus prevention and treatment of infections is very important.

Chest pain that is severe or is associated with shortness of breath needs **urgent** medical evaluation. The diagnosis of chest pain can frequently be difficult because the types of pain experienced are often unclear and it can be challenging to determine if the pain is from heart disease, lung disease, or other causes. You should also have a medical evaluation for less significant chest pain if it is persistent or if it interferes with sleep or other activities.

It is important to talk with your medical provider about any types of chest pain you experience. By working with your healthcare team, and communicating openly, there are many strategies available to help manage the pain associated with asbestos related disease.

If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, or would like to receive it by mail: Contact Tanis Hernandez at the CARD: [tanis@libbyasbestos.org](mailto:tanis@libbyasbestos.org) or 406-293-9274 x29.



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## **THE BIG CARD NEWS**

### **THE CARD DATABASE**

Karmanos Cancer Institute (KCI) visited Libby and CARD in early October. The goal of their trip was to work towards finalizing the creation of a CARD database. KCI received an EPA grant to assist CARD in creating this database. This is one of the most valuable research tools because it allows patient data to be extracted easily to understand trends and patterns of disease. This is very important for meaningful research to be accomplished. Only through understanding health trends can we determine if different tools or treatments actually help people. The database is a powerful tool that will allow us to get started on research activities with our partner universities and institutions to develop new and effective therapies.

Patient information would be stored in the database, only after patients give permission by signed consent. Their name would never be attached but all of their health information would be entered. This is a voluntary decision each patient will make and it would never affect the healthcare and services they receive from CARD.

It is very exciting to be establishing an organized management system of health data that is so important for meaningful research. Access to the database will be granted after review and acceptance of proposed researched activities. Approval from the CARD doctors, the CARD Scientific Advisory Group and the CARD Board of Directors (community volunteers) will be required for researchers to utilize this important information.

To make the database and research useful, everyone will need to be willing to get involved. As this project matures we will keep you informed about all of the details. Remember, CARD research is a community project! If you have any questions feel free to call CARD at 406-293-9274.