



# CARD NEWS

Center for Asbestos Related Disease

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### Exciting Visitors come to Libby & CARD in August!

- CARD Scientific Advisory Group
- National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

## Amphibole Asbestos Disease Recognized by Social Security

Tanis Hernandez

CARD Social Worker

Being involved in the world of Libby amphibole asbestos issues, we have all learned that the asbestos related diseases associated with Libby amphibole are different than the asbestos related diseases associated with other types of asbestos. Although we have know this for some time, the rest of the world has often not been aware of the difference. This has presented lots of challenges for many people in situations such as receiving proper medical care or getting disability.

It is important for all people impacted by amphibole asbestos that the Social Security Administration has now acknowledged the uniqueness of this disease. It now gives validity to this fact around the nation. Social Security would not have been able to make this new ruling if it wasn't for the efforts of Senator Baucus, his staff, and Dr. Black .

**What does it mean that the Social Security Administration now recognizes Libby amphibole asbestos disease?** A ruling was issued effective May 25, 2006 that will benefit people with Libby amphibole asbestos diseases applying for Social Security Disability benefits. The

ruling recognizes that Libby amphibole asbestos diseases are different from chrysotile asbestos diseases. This warrants different criteria in determining if someone is disabled due to their asbestos related disease.

### Is the process of applying for Social Security Disability benefits different for people with Libby amphibole asbestos disease?

The process of applying for disability benefits has not changed. It is still a challenging process and at times it can take many months or even years to get a final decision. However, with this new ruling, people with Libby amphibole asbestos disease will get a more accurate evaluation of their disability status. The criteria used will now better reflect, the disease they are experiencing as opposed to the criteria previously used.

**Is it a special Social Security payment or "cash bonus" for someone who has Libby amphibole asbestos disease?** No, it is not a special payment. People must apply for Social Security Disability benefits just like they always have.

**How do they decide how much money I get?** Social Security decides how much money each individual gets based on how much that individual made in gross wages throughout their working life. Payment amount has nothing to do with what type of disability a person has.

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## CARD Awarded ATSDR Contract

CARD has been awarded a contract from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) entitled *Comparison of Direct-Digital and Film Screen Chest Radiographs With Regard to Detecting and Classifying Asbestos-Related Pleural Abnormalities*. This project will help to determine if digital x-rays provide the same quality as hard copy films for diagnosing abnormalities in the pleural lining (the lining around the lungs). This project could potentially change the standard of practice currently used to identify asbestos related diseases.

Dr. Black and Dr. Whitehouse will determine which people are good candidates to participate in the study. The individual's involved must have a high resolution CT scan within 12 months and a specific presentation of asbestos related disease. It is estimated that this study will be occurring over the next 18 months.

The study will look at over two hundred cases where diagnosis of an asbestos related disease is difficult to make. Because of the subtle presentation of some people's disease, their x-rays will be an excellent case for review as it will help determine if digital or hard copy x-rays are best suited for diagnosing. Currently CT is recognized as the "gold standard" for identifying asbestos related diseases. CARD is very excited to partner with ATSDR in this important project. If you would like more information on this study contact Kimberly Rowse at 293-9274 ext. 28.

### CARD is looking for Board Members

The Center for Asbestos Related Disease (CARD) is governed by a community based Board of Directors. The board is representative of the Libby community and helps set the direction and priorities of CARD.

The CARD Board is now accepting applications to expand board membership. Meetings are held monthly, but events, committees, and special meetings can occur more frequently.

Interested individuals should contact one of the following:

JoElyn Brus at 293-5537 or [rjbrus@lclink.com](mailto:rjbrus@lclink.com)

LeRoy Thom at 293-8731 or [montmac@libby.org](mailto:montmac@libby.org)

Mike Gieseey at 295-7441 or [mgieseey\\_CARD@hotmail.com](mailto:mgieseey_CARD@hotmail.com)

### White Crosses Retired

A new tradition began Sunday, May 28th when the asbestos memorial service and candle light vigil was held at Riverside Memorial Park in Libby. This is the location where a permanent memorial is in the process of being established. If you want to get involved call Gary Swenson at 293-7983.

With the new tradition beginning, it brings an end to the white crosses ceremony at the cemetery. If anyone is interested in having the white cross of their family member you can contact Gayla Benefield at 293-5535.

## Amphibole Asbestos Disease Recognized by Social Security continued...

**I am a person who has been diagnosed with a Libby amphibole asbestos related disease, but I'm still pretty healthy and working? Am I eligible for the benefit?** Probably not, people need to have Libby amphibole asbestos disease (or in combination with other health problems) at a level severe enough to prevent a person from maintaining any type of employment.

**I currently receive Social Security Disability benefits. Do I need to do something?** No, you already have been approved for benefits. The ruling only relates to a change in the qualifying criteria that will improve their chances of getting approved.

**What if I applied for Social Security Disability benefits before and was denied?** If you were previously denied disability benefits, it is suggested you

contact the Social Security Administration to see if they can reopen your case or if you should reapply. State that you have been diagnosed with a Libby amphibole asbestos disease. They will be able to give you guidance on how to proceed.

**I receive full retirement benefits from Social Security. I have never applied for disability benefits before. Am I eligible for an increase in my Social Security monthly benefit?** No, there is no provision for social security disability benefits when someone is past full retirement age and receives full retirement benefits.

**How do I know if these changes in the Social Security Disability apply to me?** Call your local Social Security Office. The Kalispell office serves the Libby area and their phone number is 1-800-573-6102.

## Understanding Medications for Asbestos Related Diseases

Deb Cirian

CARD Registered Nurse

Discussed below are the basic descriptions of several medications that are prescribed to treat asbestos related diseases. In addition to understanding the medication you take, it is important to know the proper way to use your medication and to learn about and report any side effects you may experience. Let your doctor know if you have any other medical problems, if you are taking any other medications, and if you have any allergies. This is important to prevent negative drug interactions. Always talk with your medical provider so you can have a complete understanding of the medications you take.

**Advair** (Combination of two medications: fluticasone -pronounced floo-TIK-a-sone and salmeterol -pronounced sal-me-te-role) **Description:** Fluticasone is an inhaled corticosteroid, it prevents cells in the lungs and bronchial tubes from releasing substances that cause wheezing, chest tightness, and asthma-like symptoms. Salmeterol is a long-acting bronchodilator. Bronchodilators work by relaxing the bronchial passages to open up, it does not work quickly.

**Atrovent** (ipratropium -pronounced i-pra-troe-pee-um) **Description:** Atrovent is a bronchodilator; this is a medication that opens up the bronchial tubes or air passages by relaxing them. Atrovent helps reduce coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and trouble breathing by increasing the flow of air into the lungs. Atrovent helps control symptoms, not cure them. Atrovent is usually used in conjunction with other bronchodilators.

**Adrenergic Bronchodilators** include **Serevent** (Salmeterol -pronounced sal-me-te-role). **Albuterol** (also known as Proventil or Ventolin) **Description:** Adrenergic bronchodilators are drugs that are inhaled through the mouth. These drugs work by relaxing the bronchial tubes or air passages. They open them up to allow for easier air flow into the lungs. Some of the drugs in this classification work to prevent symptoms like wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, while others work to treat these same symptoms when they are acute. Serevent is a long-acting bronchodilator, that when used with anti-inflammatory medications can prevent the symptoms. Serevent cannot treat symptoms

when they are acute. Albuterol is a quick-acting bronchodilator that treats symptoms when they flare up.

**Combivent** (Combination of two medications: ipratropium -pronounced i pra troe' pee um and albuterol -pronounced al byoo' ter ole) **Description:** Ipratropium and albuterol are bronchodilators, these medications work by relaxing the bronchial tubes, helping to prevent wheezing, shortness of breath, and trouble breathing. Combivent helps control the symptoms, but doesn't cure the symptoms.

**Flonase** (fluticasone -pronounced floo-tik-a-sone) **Description:** Flonase is in the corticosteroid family of medications. Corticosteroids are in the steroid classification. Flonase is sprayed in the nose, it reduces stuffy or runny noses, irritation, sneezing, and other nasal symptoms due to allergies or not caused by allergies.

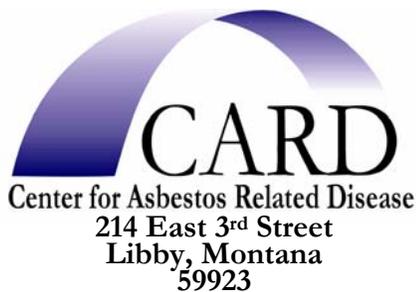
**Flovent** (fluticasone-inhaled -pronounced floo-tik-a-sone) **Description:** Flovent is a corticosteroid, it is used to prevent symptoms like wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath. It must be used regularly to have any benefit. Flovent works by preventing certain cells from releasing substances in the lungs that cause symptoms of wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath. They help reduce inflammation in the airway. They are generally used in conjunction with bronchodilators.

**Foradil** (formoterol -pronounced for moh' te rol) **Description:** Foradil is in a class of medication called long-acting beta agonists. It works by relaxing and opening the bronchial tubes or air passages, allowing easier air flow into the lungs. Foradil is used to treat wheezing, shortness of breath, and helps prevent bronchospasms. Foradil reduces the symptoms, but does not cure them.

**Nasocort** (triamcinolone -pronounced trye am sin' oh lone) **Description:** Nasocort is a corticosteroid, and is used to prevent allergy symptoms like sneezing, itching, runny or stuffy nose. Nasocort prevents and controls allergy symptoms, but does not cure them. Nasocort reduces inflammation and swelling in nasal passages.

**Spiriva** (tiotropium -pronounced ty-oh-tro-pee-um) **Description:** Spiriva is a bronchodilator, it is used in treating wheezing and breathing difficulties. Bronchodilators work by relaxing the bronchial tubes or air passages, they are able to open up and air flows easier into the lungs. Spiriva is taken by inhalation, it reduces coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.

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**

### **Director of National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to Visit Libby and CARD!**

**The CARD is very excited to welcome many prestigious visitors to Libby this August.**

**Dr. David Schwartz is the director for both the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences and the National Toxicology Program. Dr. Henry Falk is the director for both the National Center for Environmental Health and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). They are here to learn about CARD activities and to review cases regarding Libby amphibole asbestos disease.**

**The doctors will be welcomed to Libby by the CARD Board of Directors and the CARD Scientific Advisory Group. The Scientific Advisory Group is a group of doctors from around the nation who have demonstrated great commitment to CARD research. They see the importance of what can be done in cooperation with the Libby community to further amphibole asbestos research. Dr. Brad Black and Dr. Alan Whitehouse work very closely with this group to review all research activities. The group consists of Dr. Michael Harbut of Karmanos Cancer Institute, Dr. Vik Kapil of ATSDR, Dr. Stephen Levin of Mount Sinai, Dr. James Lockey of the University of Cincinnati, Dr. Aubrey Miller of EPA, Dr. Brooke Mossman of University of Vermont, and Dr. Ann Schwartz of Karmanos Cancer Institute.**

**We look forward to telling you in the fall edition the outcomes of this exciting meeting!**