

THE FACTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF ASBESTOS EXPOSURE

“Turning Anger to Action”

Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization
Blends Volunteerism, Science and Public Policy



Listen and you will hear a faint cough, a precursor to death. Consider the story of our family – one family out of tens of thousands devastated each year by asbestos-caused diseases.

After months of enduring a persistent cough, fatigue and weight loss, surgery confirmed my husband Alan’s diagnosis – malignant pleural mesothelioma caused by asbestos. Research revealed a grim prognosis, bewildering treatment options and devastating isolation. For nearly a year, he was tethered to oxygen 24 hours a day as the disease tortuously ravaged his body and painfully took his life.

Globally, asbestos kills 100,000 workers every year.¹ Uncovering over a hundred years of documentation linking asbestos to deadly diseases, I vowed to one day share my knowledge and experience to help others. My commitment to educating the public about the impact of this horrific epidemic gave me strength to fight Alan’s disease.

In 2004, Doug Larkin and I met in Washington, D.C. during a “Ban Asbestos” press conference. Doug’s father-in-law also had mesothelioma. From opposite coasts, we shared similar experiences. We knew that victims needed to turn anger to action so we co-founded the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO), run entirely by volunteers. Once muffled by isolation, victims and their shattered, grieving families now unite to fight for asbestos disease awareness and prevention. Our strategy is to blend volunteerism, science and public policy to prevent exposure and eliminate all asbestos-caused diseases.

For decades, advocates and health and safety experts have worked on preventing asbestos diseases. ADAO is new to the arena and respectfully follows their path. ADAO victims and our Science Advisory Board work with over a thousand asbestos victims, concerned citizens, doctors and environmentalists around the world. The internet has enabled ADAO to connect more than 3,500 supporters and mobilize nearly 100 active volunteers.

¹ International Labour Organization (ILO)

Most asbestos patients have never heard of mesothelioma and think asbestos has been banned. These preventable and incurable diseases are not rare, but instead, routinely undiagnosed and under-recorded. Asbestos exposure is responsible for 54% of occupational cancers.² The primary governmental focus in the U.S. is occupational asbestos diseases, but those are not the only victims. ADAO is committed to changing public policy to protect not only workers, but every person exposed to asbestos.

Over the past three years, ADAO has earned the reputation of being a reliable and independent resource not only for patients and families but also for the press, Congress and the medical community.

ADAO volunteers are proud of our action summary that includes:

- Helping to shape legislation
- Educational and Medical resources in English, Spanish and French
- Asbestos video library channel
- Tributes to victims
- Annual International Asbestos Awareness Day Conference *Global Mission: Call To Action To Prevent, Detect Treat Asbestos-Related Diseases & Trauma*
- Patient and Caregiver Support Network

There is no safe level of asbestos exposure³ but natural disasters and deconstruction guarantee it will continue. The U.S. has more than 30 million homes, schools and public buildings contaminated with asbestos. The collapse of the World Trade Center towers led to the release of hundreds of tons of asbestos. “The Mayor of New York has recently stated that 670,000 people are at risk because of their exposure to 9/11 contamination.”⁴

One life lost to an asbestos-related disease is tragic; hundreds of thousands of lives lost is unconscionable. While we can’t reclaim the lives of our loved ones, we can make the world a better place for those who come after us.

My editorial is dedicated in loving memory of Alan Reinstein, and the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who paid the ultimate price for asbestos exposure, their lives.

For online educational and medical resources or support please visit
www.AsbestosDiseaseAwareness.org.

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² The World Health Organization (WHO)

³ Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

⁴ Jonathan Bennett, New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH)