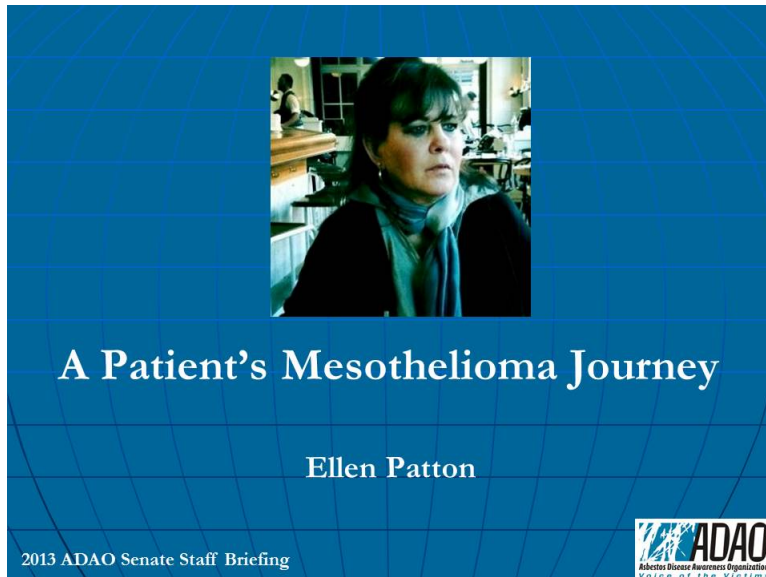


Ellen Patton, Mesothelioma Patient
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO)
2013 Senate Staff Briefing
“Asbestos: The Impact on Public Health, the Environment, and the Economy”
July 11, 2013



Slide 1

Hi, I'm Ellen Patton. I'm here not only to share with you all my own personal story about my journey with mesothelioma, but the story of many others that I've met along the way who's voices are now silenced because of asbestos.



Slide 2

At the age of 40 and after countless years of a bad marriage, I made some major changes in my life. I was so looking forward to a second chance for a happy life. Mesothelioma stole my second chance.

On June 1st, 2001 at 41 years old I was blindsided with the diagnosis of bilateral malignant pleural mesothelioma and was told to prepare to die. I was unknowingly exposed to this silent killer at some point in my life. I never worked with asbestos. My exposure could've come second handedly from my uncle's occupational exposure or my father's DIY home improvement projects, or I could've been exposure through consumer products.

Like many other mesothelioma patients, I was initially misdiagnosed. Even after receiving a proper diagnosis, things didn't get any better. Surgeons told me things like "you can fight it, but you're not going to beat it" and "enjoy the little time you have left." The median life expectancy for a patient diagnosed with mesothelioma is six to eighteen months. Here I stand alive 12 years later at 52 as an outlier. Some may say I'm lucky, but these last 12 years have been some of the worst in my entire life.

When you're told you have no options, you take anything you can get.

- Mesothelioma invaded both of my lungs
 - Surgery = too invasive
 - Chemotherapy = side effects would've killed me
- Alternative = immune therapy
 - Immune Therapy at IAT in Grand Bahamas
 - 3x/year every day for 2 weeks
 - ~\$21,000/year
 - Medicare insurance

2013 ADAO Senate Staff Briefing



Slide 3

I don't know where it came from, but I do know that it left me with a heinous disease invading both of my lungs and minimal treatment options to get rid of it. Surgery would be too invasive and the side effects of chemotherapy would've killed me.

I decided to opt for an alternative treatment option – immune therapy. Three times a year every day for two weeks I would receive this alternative treatment in the Bahamas. It posed a financial burden of \$21,000/year and I wasn't sure it was even going to be effective, but when you're told you have no options, you take anything you can get. Because I have mesothelioma, I'm uninsurable - making it even more challenging to fight this battle. I can't work because then I'm not eligible for Medicare. I have to be choosy about what I go to the doctor's for. Sometimes I even have to go without the pain medicine. Asbestos has brought about a never-ending, vicious cycle.

I decided to opt for an

Pennie, Mesothelioma Decedent



2013 ADAO Senate Staff Briefing

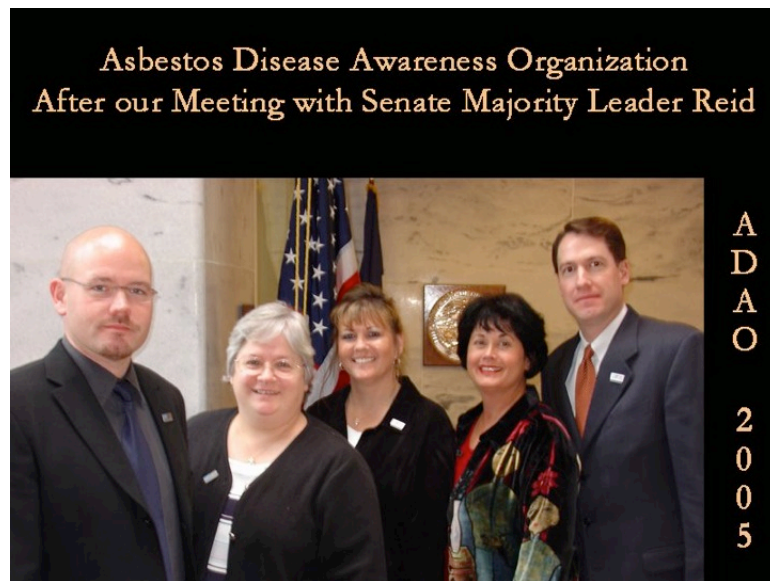


Slide 4

While at the clinic receiving my immune therapy treatment, I met a fellow mesothelioma patient, Pennie, and we became great friends for many years. Four years ago at age 55, Pennie, died two days after her first and only grandchild was

Organization (ADAO)
7/13/2013

born. As Kayla, Pennie's only daughter, gave birth to Olivia on the 4th floor of their local hospital, Pennie was dying of mesothelioma one floor up. A day after I took this photo of Pennie with her daughter Kayla, her first grandchild, Olivia, and her husband of 34 years, Rob, Pennie lost her courageous fight with mesothelioma. I'll never forget being at her bedside and seeing the monitor say, "reset for next patient." As much as I thought about Pennie's family and friends in that moment, I couldn't help but picture myself as that next patient. That IS my future. This disease is not curable, but it is entirely preventable.



Slide 5

As I still stand here with a million whys – why did Pennie's fight end sooner than mine? Why did Janelle and Debbie have to leave shattered families left behind? Why were we the ones who were exposed to asbestos? – I do know that speaking to you all helps to give what's left of my life a purpose. Thank you all for allowing me to share these important facts

and stories with you all and I hope you pass them along to your bosses and use them to ban asbestos. 107,000 people this year will die of an asbestos-related disease. Sooner or later, one of those people will be me. We're not just statistics – we're real people. Thank you.