

Linda Reinstein, ADAO Co-Founder and President/CEO  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization  
“A World without Asbestos” Conference  
Casale Monferrato, Italy  
April 28, 2011

***Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization: “Partnering for Prevention and Social Media Advocacy”***

“PARTNERING FOR PREVENTION  
AND SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY”

**Linda Reinstein**  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO)  
President/CEO and Co-Founder  
[linda@adao.us](mailto:linda@adao.us)  
United States

Good morning. I am Linda Reinstein, Co-Founder and President of the [Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization](#) (ADAO), from the United States. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to join you at the

[Associazione Familiari Vittime Amianto](#) “A World without Asbestos” Conference in Casale. As we all know too well, asbestos exposure has no boundaries or borders; but similarly, the efforts to implement a ban on asbestos and someday end its tragedy, also has no boundaries or borders.



I want to dedicate this presentation to the Eternit asbestos victims. Everyone here today understands the importance of asbestos awareness and we thank you for your courage in facing the industry in pursuit of

justice and protecting public health.



It is surely fate that we come together on [International Workers Memorial Day](#) and remember those who have died from these preventable asbestos-caused diseases and to prevent exposure through our combined global efforts. As we say, “*Remember the Dead, Fight for the Living*” – and our fight continues.

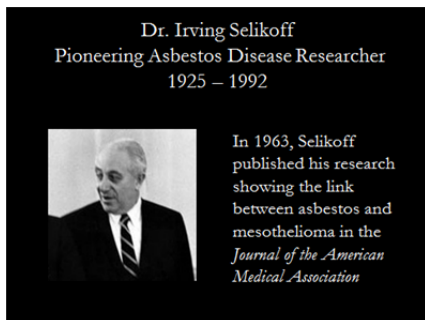


I want to share a bit about the personal side of my journey so you can better understand the motivation behind ADAO. In 2003, my husband, Alan, was diagnosed with mesothelioma. At the time, I had never heard of the disease; I thought asbestos had been banned. Alan chose to undergo an Extra-Pleural Pneumonectomy (EPP) -- a surgical procedure that removed his left lung, pericardium, and replaced his diaphragm. Our then 10 year-old daughter had to watch her father slowly die from a preventable disease. Sadly, as well all know, our experience was a common one. Twisted fate brings me here today – as Alan and I should be celebrating our 26<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

## TURN YOUR ANGER INTO ACTION

Like many asbestos victims around the world, we needed to turn our grief and anger into action, and in 2004 the Reinstein and Larkin families founded ADAO – united for education, advocacy, and community support.

### USA History



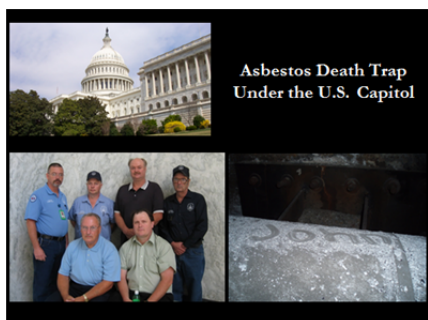
In the United States, our history with asbestos is unfortunately long. We owe much to Dr. Irving Selikoff, a pioneer who first brought this problem to public attention in 1963 when he published research showing the link between asbestos and mesothelioma in the

Journal of the American Medical Association.



This public health crisis is also well documented throughout the U.S. In 2001, the collapse of the World Trade Center towers led to the release of hundreds of tons of asbestos. Medical monitoring has

already confirmed the collateral damage.



In the tunnels that provide both heat and air-conditioning to the United States Capitol, workers

were exposed and fell ill due to asbestos exposure; some say they've been criminally neglected. Underground, the asbestos dust was so thick a worker wrote his name on the top of the pipe.



And asbestos is so much more common than we could dare to imagine. ADAO commissioned an independent study in search of asbestos in common, everyday consumer products. In November of 2007, we released

our 18-month product testing findings identifying asbestos contamination in five consumer products, including a child's toy. Worse yet, we have not banned asbestos in the United States. [ADAO product testing report is available online.](#)



We stand in awe of you and your [Eternit criminal](#) trial, as we faced a similar trial in our judicial system.

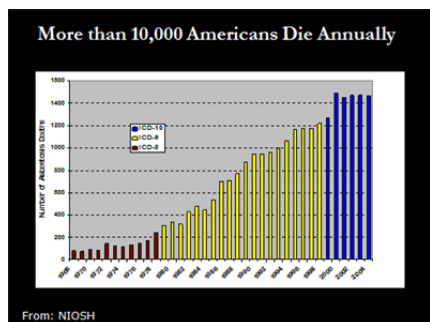
After a four year trial, in 2009, the U.S. Department of Justice lost the criminal case against W.R. Grace,

one of the largest manufacturers of asbestos in Libby, Montana. The U.S. government called it the nation's biggest environmental disaster in which hundreds of miners and residents of Libby died from asbestos exposure from the contaminated vermiculite mine.



*“Dangers in the Dust: Inside the Global Asbestos Trade”* is a powerful investigative series based on extensive research in eight countries about the global asbestos trade and how the industry has spent nearly \$100

million since the mid-1980s to keep asbestos in commerce.



More than 10,000 Americans die each year from preventable asbestos-caused diseases. In 2006, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reported that asbestosis deaths are

increasing.

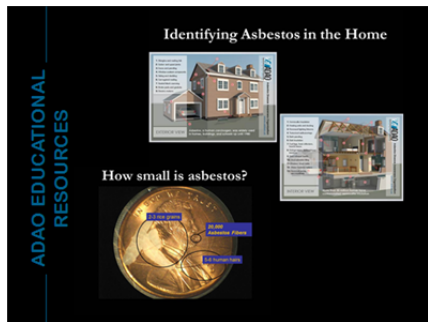
## EDUCATION: Knowledge is power.

**Knowledge is Stronger than Asbestos**

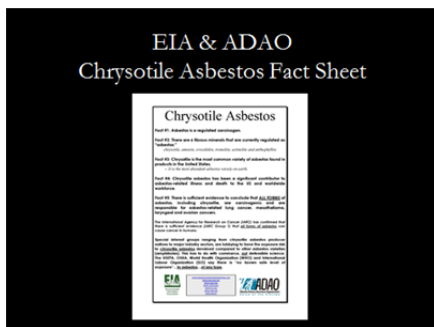
- Asbestos is a human carcinogen and there is no safe level of asbestos exposure
- Asbestos fibers nearly invisible, odorless, tasteless, and indestructible
- Prevention is the only cure

Our solidarity is our strongest asset to protect public health. When we consistently share these top facts – we increase public pressure. 1. [Asbestos is a human carcinogen and there is no safe level of asbestos exposure](#). 2) Asbestos fibers are nearly invisible,

odorless, tasteless, and indestructible. 3) Prevention is the only cure



Today, [35 million homes in the USA](#) are still contaminated with asbestos. The top three questions posed to ADAO about asbestos are: What is it? Where is it? What do I do if I've been exposed or diagnosed? The U.S. Congress and the media quake when we point out the nearly invisible [20,000 asbestos fibers under President Lincoln's nose](#) on this US penny or the ["Identifying Asbestos in the Home"](#) graphic – which includes specific pinpoints on where to expect potential asbestos in the home.



All of our educational materials are online and free. ADAO and the Environmental Information Association (EIA) developed the [Chrysotile Fact Sheet](#) in 2009 as a resource to denounce the propaganda distributed by the Chrysotile industry.



And we are on the brink of a true knowledge revolution fueled by technology. The power of the people is now stronger than the people in power. 40% of the global population lives in China and India and



the average age in India is 25. The younger generation know how to use their phones and the internet, and the power that they have at their fingertips is beyond what we knew just a decade ago.



It is all about **Communication. Collaboration.**

**Action.** The social media movement has given rise to incredible grassroots actions. With a few clicks, you are connected and able to network with like-minded

professionals, experts, and victims.



Disseminating information is effortless, powerful, cost effective, and allows for a truly integrative social media strategy - where you can easily join the conversation and click “share, like, or comment” from

your computer or mobile phone!



The [ADAAO website](http://www.adao.us) has extensive educational resources, including videotaped conference presentations from many of our colleagues here today.

In 2008, the asbestos ban legislation became especially

confusing and complicated and, in order to maintain a strong voice and dispel

propaganda, we created the [Ban Asbestos website](#). This has enabled us to streamline communication, share facts and legislative history, and expand our grassroots campaign by providing a vehicle whereby people can contact their Congressional Representative to voice their support – all from one website.



Decades of ban asbestos advocacy work from you and organizations around the world have culminated in the creation of a new social media based effort called the [Global Ban Asbestos Network](#) (GBAN), a non-profit and independent initiative established to promote and

facilitate digital collaboration to realize our common mission - to achieve a global asbestos ban.



Serving as a portal, GBAN allows contributors and visitors to easily access information from Facebook, YouTube and other networks. Technology has given us the ability to translate copy from our website into

nearly 60 different languages, helping us take our message to a new global level.



## SOLIDARITY DRIVES ACTION:

**Education  
Compliance  
Enforcement**



Today, our most effective weapon against the asbestos industry is our collective activism to increase education, compliance, and enforcement. Presently, in the US, minimal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection agency (EPA) fines and lack of enforcement make existing laws and directives weak and, therefore, deadly.



April was an incredible month of education, advocacy and community. We launched our educational campaign during Global Asbestos Awareness Week entitled "[Exposed – The Facts about Asbestos](#)" which was shared around the world thanks to digital technology.



As we've learned, together, we can achieve great things. I am looking forward to strategizing about how we can increase our collaborative efforts to maximize our strengths into an even more formidable global force.



One life lost to asbestos disease is tragic; hundreds of thousands of lives is unconscionable. Once we know about the dangers of asbestos, we all have the opportunity and the responsibility to protect the public

from preventable asbestos-caused diseases. The manifest calling for a global ban is a strong example of how we can make an impact when we all work together, and ADAO is thrilled to be a part of this movement. The time is now to end the catastrophic social injustice caused from asbestos. **Together, change is possible.**