

# Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization

“Voice of the Victims”

## UNITED STATES SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS Hearing

“Examination of the Health Effects of Asbestos and Methods of Mitigating Such Impacts”

Linda Reinstein

Executive Director, Co-founder and Mesothelioma Widow  
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization

June 12, 2007

I would like to thank Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe and the entire EPW committee for the honor and opportunity to testify today.

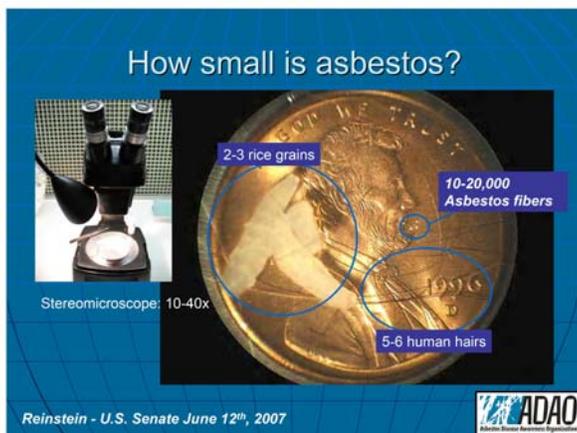
My name is Linda Reinstein, Executive Director of the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO) and now a mesothelioma widow. My husband, Alan Reinstein, lost his three year battle with mesothelioma, a deadly asbestos cancer, on May 2006. I am neither a lobbyist nor an attorney, only a volunteer.

Today I somberly represent the victims and their families who have suffered the traumatic effects of asbestos diseases. Hundreds of thousands of asbestos victims around the world paid the ultimate price for asbestos exposure: their lives. These diseases were preventable.

Before I share the faces, it is important to understand the facts. We can not alter history or bring back the dead, but we can learn from the past to save lives and money.

Most Americans trust that their air, soil and water are safe from toxic contaminants – but as victims, we know the truth. For a century, asbestos exposure had been linked to incurable diseases, yet we continue to face an enormous man-made public health crisis. Just walk the streets of Libby or New York City or talk to the U.S. Capitol Tunnel Workers – they also know all too well about the irreversible effects of asbestos poisoning. The stress and trauma is life altering for those Americans with known asbestos exposure waiting for time to reveal their medical fate. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) declared asbestos as a human carcinogen thirty years ago. The Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Labor Organization (ILO) agree - there is no safe level of asbestos exposure. The simple truth is - asbestos kills.

The Penny slide compares the nearly invisible deadly fibers just under President Lincoln’s nose to grains of rice and human hair. Once known as the “The Magic Mineral”, these



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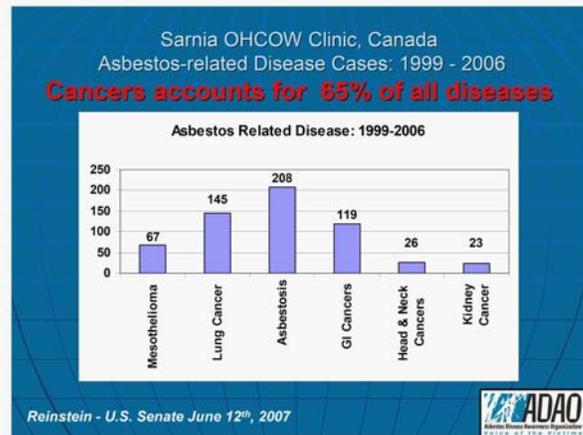
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virtually indestructible asbestos fibers can be 700 times smaller than human hair and remain suspended in air from seconds to days.

Although asbestos safety measures have been in place since the 1970s, The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reported that deaths from asbestosis, a debilitating lung disease, increased from 77 deaths in 1968 to 1,493 deaths in 2000. These and other asbestos-related diseases are not going away, only the victims who die.

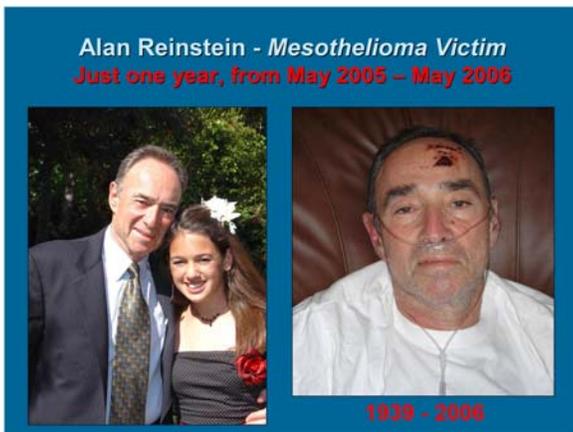
The World Health Organization estimates 125 million workers are exposed to asbestos and 90,000 workers die annually. There is no global data estimating deaths from non-occupational or environmental exposure.

Asbestos is an equal opportunity killer and the dust does not discriminate. Inhaling or swallowing asbestos fibers can cause malignant and nonmalignant diseases.



Asbestos diseases are difficult to diagnose and treat. Evolution of disease, from exposure, screening, surveillance, detection, treatment and death can take 10 - 50 years. Children are even more susceptible to carcinogens and have a shorter latency period.

It is important to focus on all asbestos-caused diseases, not just mesothelioma. The Sarnia seven year study sited: 65% of the victims suffered from asbestos-caused cancers and the remaining 35% suffered from asbestosis. Lung cancer and mesothelioma accounted for 25% and 11% respectively of asbestos diseases.



Asbestosis is the scarring of lung tissue resulting only from the inhalation of asbestos fibers which reduces oxygen transfer to the blood as well as the removal of carbon dioxide. Asbestosis is a painful, progressive and incurable lung disease with no effective treatment.

Victims suffering from pulmonary diseases and cancer feel like they are breathing through a pinched straw, for every breath, every minute, every day. When the victims' oxygen levels become critically low, they are tethered to supplemental oxygen to prolong life. Lack of oxygen causes death by respiratory failure and/or cardiac arrest.

To prolong a victim's life, many cancer patients opt for radical treatments such as having their entire diseased lung and diaphragm surgically removed. We call this, death by 1,000 cuts. Victims living with these painful, aggressive and hopelessly incurable diseases sometimes commit suicide or ask spouses to commit mercy killings.

Mesothelioma patients' medical expenses can exceed \$1 million – until death.

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## Medical Expenses Include:

- Tri-modal Cancer Treatment
  - Surgery
  - Radiation
  - Chemotherapy
- Medication & Oxygen
- Home Health/Hospice
- Psychiatry
- Interstate Travel to Medical Centers

The physical, financial and physiological devastation are immeasurable to the victims and their families. After the patient dies, financial and psychological problems continue to plague the family. For each life lost, a shattered family is left behind.

## Psychological issues are tormenting– as victims hold hands with death.

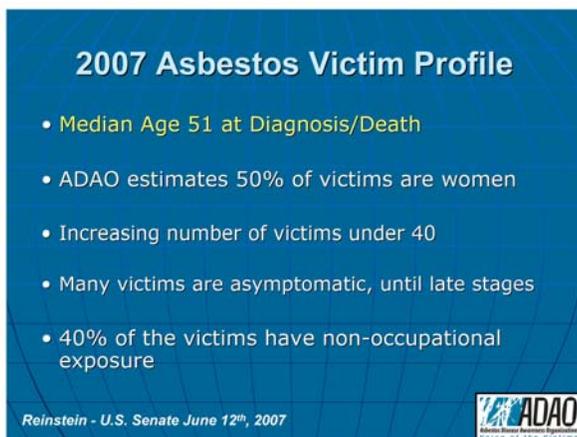
- Constantly facing death is debilitating for both the patient and family.
- Constantly facing death is debilitating for both the patient and family.
- Caregivers face both mental and physical exhaustion – Alan needed 24 hour care for 12 months.
- Depression is a common factor.

## Physical pain and treatments are brutal ; the prognosis is grim

- Screening, surveillance, and detection are exhausting and remain a constant reminder of exposure and possible terminal diseases.
- Late stage diagnosis is common, as many victims are asymptomatic.
- Victim has baffling and radical treatment options to navigate.
- Dangerous surgeries and toxic medicine – if the diseases don't end your life, the treatments may.

## Financial issues devour assets and threaten financial stability

- Expensive medical treatments. One month of Alan's prescriptions, oxygen and chemotherapy averaged \$104,000.
- Lost jobs or reduced income results when victims are too ill to work.
- Health benefits are also terminated as a result of losing a job.



Constant fear and extreme isolation magnifies these three factors.

In 1990, the average patient was a male, age 70. Our data shows the new patient profile to be a 51 year old woman. Younger victims are dying from diseases. Recently, a 16 year-old girl was diagnosed with mesothelioma. Patients diagnosed with asbestos-caused diseases are completely innocent. They are firefighters and veterans, construction workers and engineers. They are the women who became exposed washing their husbands' work clothes. They are children whose loving hug turned deadly.

Surveillance in the US continues to under report asbestos-related disease. Without disease registries, effective outreach and well implemented surveillance programs; we can not accurately forecast the magnitude of disease.

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## Deadly Contamination Continues Today

Asbestos was widely used in the construction and attic insulation in millions of homes in the U.S. and Canada built before 1975. More than 30 million homes, schools and office buildings are still contaminated with deadly asbestos.

In 2002, the collapse of the World Trade Center towers led to the release of hundreds of tons of asbestos from the towers. An estimated 20,000 responders, workers, volunteers and residents suffer from respiratory diseases. The annual direct treatment costs are \$140 million dollars. We can only extrapolate the cost of human tragedy and treatment expenses from the Hurricane Katrina disaster one of whose consequences is poorly controlled asbestos exposure in the buildings being repaired and demolished. The World Health Organization has started an asbestos action program to help countries all over the world develop national plans, based on the conclusion that “the most efficient way to eliminate asbestos-related diseases is to stop using all types of asbestos.”

Asbestos continues to be mined and exported from Canada. The United States and Canada remain the only two industrialized nations that have not yet banned the use of asbestos in common products while more than 40 countries have banned asbestos. Consumers are at risk with imported products contaminated with asbestos such as brakes and asbestos-cement building panels. The asbestos ban will only be as effective as the laws that are enforced. Presently, minimal fines and lack of enforcement make our existing laws weak and deadly asbestos exposure continues.



### What is a human life worth?

Certainly banning asbestos and investing in safe alternatives. Without an asbestos ban, deaths and litigation will continue. To profit over people is unconscionable. It is time to eliminate asbestos exposure, while simultaneously investing in research for a cure and improved treatments. An immediate worldwide ban on the production and use of asbestos is long overdue, fully justified and absolutely necessary. We applaud Senator Patty Murray for the Ban Asbestos in America Act, and hope that this is only the start of a ban across the globe.

Support for this critical issue comes from some of the most well respected members of the scientific and medical community from around the world. I

have included a list of these endorsers in my written testimony.

Thank you.

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**The signatures below support these four points and wish to have their names entered into the Congressional Record.**

- 1. Ban Asbestos**
- 2. No safe level of asbestos**
- 3. Invest in research for a cure and improve treatments**
- 4. Education to prevent exposure**

**U.S. Capitol Tunnel Shop Workers**

John Thayer  
Scott Smith  
Tom Baker  
Martin Blanchet  
Ed Hill

Frank Binns  
Charlie Morris  
Tim Taylor  
Christian Raley  
Rick Leanord

Daniel H. Serman, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Associate Professor of Medicine in Surgery  
Director, Interventional Pulmonology Program  
Clinical Director, Thoracic Oncology Gene Therapy Program  
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Professor of Public Health and Chair, Department of Environmental and Occupational Health  
Drexel School of Public Health  
Co-Chair-ADAO Scientific Advisory Board.

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Steven Markowitz MD  
Queens College  
City University of New York

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Occupational & Environmental Health Network of India (OEHNI)

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Michael Bowker, Author  
Fatal Deception

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Lincoln County Asbestos Victims Relief Organization  
Gayla Benefield  
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Libby, Montana

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Medical Director  
Center for Asbestos Related Disease  
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Libby, Montana

Laurie Kazan-Allen  
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)

The Safety and Health Training Center  
Ray Turpin, Executive Director  
Adjunct Professor, University of S. Florida  
OSHA Training Institute Education Center  
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New York, NY 10025

Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum  
Windrush Millennium Centre  
Tony Whitston

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Southeast Asbestos Awareness and Victims Support Group  
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East Sussex.BN23 8DU. England

ABREA - Brazilian Association of Asbestos Exposed People from Rio de Janeiro e Sao Paulo

ABEA- Asbestos Exposed People from Bahia

Virtual-Citizen Network for the Ban of Asbestos in Latin America

Fernanda Giannasi, Civil and Safety Engineer, Labour Inspector  
Labour Department in São Paulo State

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Kenny Moss	3400 Snow Goose Dr.	Wasilla	AK	99654
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Ronnie Kincaid	6 Ridge Drive	Pelham	AL	35124
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Lois Schwarting	201 E Ivanhoe	Gilbert	AZ	85295
Marty Schwarting	201 E Ivanhoe	Gilbert	AZ	85295
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Daniel Horodysky	2213 Acton Street	Berkeley	CA	94702
Tom Condit	2217 1/2 McGee Ave	Berkeley	CA	94703
Arlene O'Connor	24697 Gleneagles Drive	Corona	CA	92883
Rhio O'Connor	25697 Gleneagles Drive	Corona	CA	92883
Eric Johnson	5343 Tanaya	Fresno	CA	93722
Susan E. Burke	25761 Le Parc #104	Lake Forest	CA	92630
Alene Lee		Los Angeles	CA	90001
Bert Mintz	5657 Wilshire Blvd Suite 310	Los Angeles	CA	90036
Greg Lee		Los Angeles	CA	90001
Hanne Mintz	5657 Wilshire Blvd Suite 310	Los Angeles	CA	90036
Jerry Lee		Los Angeles	CA	90001
Lisa Lee		Los Angeles	CA	90001
Marina Mintz	5657 Wilshire Blvd Suite 310	Los Angeles	CA	90036
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Tony Vickers	1336 Via Romero	Palos Verdes Estates	CA	90274
Jen Tanguileg	71 Viking Drive	Pleasant Hill	CA	94523
Robert Tanguileg	71 Viking Drive	Pleasant Hill	CA	94523
Ellen Tunkelrott	1613 Stanford Ave	Redondo Beach	CA	90278

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Trisa Zembron Endicott	1015 Tanzania Drive	Roseville	CA	95611
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Abbey Secord		Littleton	CO	80165
Don Secord		Littleton	CO	80165
Holly Hansen-Estick	16F2Scuppo Road	Danbury	CT	06811
David Allgaier	205 Baldwin Ave.	Meriden	CT	06450
Marc Zimmerman	95 Hillspoint Road	Westport	CT	06880
Stacey Zimmerman	95 Hillspoint Road	Westport	CT	06880
Norma Mantz	100 Cane Breakers Drive	Cocoa	FL	32927
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Ellen Canfield	15707 Ibis Ridge Drive	Lithia	FL	33547
Pershing W. Canfield Jr	15707 Ibis Ridge Drive	Lithia	FL	33547
Elaine Forin	6623 Coral Lake Drive	Margate	FL	33063
Norman Forin	6623 Coral Lake Drive	Margate	FL	33063
Russell W. Everett	2900 N. Hwy. A1A 9B	N. Hutchinson Island	FL	34949
Alicia Murray-Bodnar	221 18th Street S.E.	Naples	FL	34117
Linda Heuertz	4310 NE 16 Avenue	Oakland Park	FL	33334
Barbara Vagenas	305 Carolyn Ave	Panama City Beach	FL	32407
Jim Vagenas	305 Carolyn Ave	Panama City Beach	FL	32407
Dorinda Davis	8417 Cypress Lake Circle	Sarasota	FL	32430
Catherine Hanks	Green Street	Tallahassee	FL	32303
Martha Soder	2464 Papillion Way	Tallahassee	FL	32309
Eleanor Dietrick	640 Muriel Ct	Tallahassee	FL	30303
Jean Ainsworth	6389 Mallard Trace	Tallahassee	FL	32312
Marlene Hanna	2826 Frogs Leap Way	Tallahassee	FL	32309
Paul Rollin	6389 Mallard Trace	Tallahassee	FL	32312
Louise Huntman	1567 Apache Circle	Tavares	FL	32778
Carolyn Mills	2007 A Schley Ave.	Albany	GA	31707
John and Carolyn Mills	2007 A Schley Ave.	Albany	GA	31707
Marsha Thomas	2120 Powers Ferry Road, SE, Ste. 200	Atlanta	GA	30339
Frances Lee		Columbus	GA	31909
Lucy Pfeffa	1229-B Church Street	Decatur	GA	30030
LaWanna Welch	306 Humble Ave. # A-8	Fort Valley	GA	31030
Pamela J. Rodgers	301 Charity Ave A2	Fort Valley	GA	31030
Willie E. Rodgers, Jr	301 Charity Ave A2	Fort Valley	GA	31030
C.F. Authement	307 Humble Ave	Perry	GA	31069
Doris Authement	307 Humble Ave	Perry	GA	31069
Gail Authement	307 Humble Ave	Perry	GA	31069
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Wendy Martin	665 South Lake Street	Rogers City	MI	49779

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Norita Skramstad	3647 Highway 2 Sourt	Libby	MT	59923
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Will Smith	4601 Wagon Wheel Road	Carson City	NV	89703
Kimberly Smith	4601 Wagon Wheel Road	Carson Ctiy	NV	89703
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Sharon McCormick	130 Tennis Ave	Ambler	PA	19002

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Carolyn S McDowell	1146 Brookside Drive	Hanahan	SC	29406
Jeanette Tarr	2812 Hume Ave	Hanahan	SC	29410
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Jason L. Walter	5804 Falconcrest	Arlington	TX	76017
Wilbur F. Walter	221 Springpark Drive	Arlington	TX	76014
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Tami L. Lewis	2929 Socrates Drive	Grand Prairie	TX	75052
Tom Kendle	2904 Crest Haven Drive	Grapevine	TX	76051
Amy Hall	16415 Crossfield Drive	Houston	TX	77095
Greg Hall	16415 Crossfield Drive	Houston	TX	77095
Laura Martinez	9223 Red Castle Lane	Humble	TX	77396
Bud Vaughn	1415 Bayshore Drive	Kemah	TX	77565
Jill Vaughn	1415 Bayshore Drive	Kemah	TX	77565
Chuck Every	1310 Kloecker Rd	Sealy	TX	77474
Karen Every	1310 Kloecker Rd	Sealy	TX	77474
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**“United for Asbestos Disease Awareness, Education, Advocacy, Prevention, Support and a Cure.”**

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