

Mesothelioma: The “Orphan” Cancer

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Government funding remains elusive for deadly disease

Newton, MA. Oct. 1st 2007. While Americans have long been romanced by campaigns for breast cancer and leukemia research, it may be some time before mesothelioma enjoys a stint in the spotlight. Despite the fact that over 2,500 cases of the disease are diagnosed in the U.S. each year—with as many or more dying from it—the need to develop effective treatments for mesothelioma victims continues to be overlooked by the federal government.

“Even though it has been medically documented since the 1940s, mesothelioma remains very much an ‘orphan’ disease today,” says Attorney Jim Sokolove, principal and founder of the Law Offices of James Sokolove (www.jimsokolove.com). “The government has yet to recognize this disease as the epidemic that it really is.”

Between 2000 and 2003, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) invested less than \$2 million annually in clinical research for mesothelioma—a fraction of the funds invested in other types of cancers. And although Congress has allocated \$3.75 billion for research on various diseases since 1992, none of this money has been allocated to furthering mesothelioma studies. With no effective treatments available, the disease is almost always fatal, with an average survival time of 12 months following diagnosis.

Sokolove cites complex economic and political factors among the many reasons why mesothelioma has failed to receive significant national funding. “Although enormous financial resources are available to help improve mesothelioma treatment, there is no real effort to commit these resources.”

One group is lobbying aggressively to reverse the rising tide of mesothelioma deaths in the U.S. The Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation (MARF) coordinates numerous efforts to advance funding, studies and treatment for the disease. In 2005, MARF succeeded in obtaining from Congress the first appropriation ever for mesothelioma research.

The Law Offices of James Sokolove worked closely with MARF in the development of its new website, the Mesothelioma Resource Center (www.mesorc.com), a comprehensive support and information resource for mesothelioma victims and their families.

“MARF is doing extraordinary things in getting the voice of the mesothelioma community to be heard,” Sokolove remarks. “Through the Mesothelioma Resource Center, the LOJS hopes to compliment their efforts and provide much-needed support to victims and their loved ones.”

Those interested in learning more about mesothelioma research, clinical trials, and treatments can register for free updates at www.mesorc.com. For each person that signs up, the Law Offices of James Sokolove will make a \$200 donation to MARF.

The Law Offices of James Sokolove
1340 Centre St # 102, Newton Center,
Massachusetts MA 02459
Phone: 617-742-0696 Ext 413
Fax: 617-964-4336

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