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GRACE

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Medical Staff
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Subject: McGill University Study of Tremolite Exposure at the Libby Mine

As many of you know, a team of researchers from McGill University, School of Occupational Medicine, will be studying the health effects of tremolite exposure in the Libby mining and milling operation. Much of this work will be epidemiologic and some of the physicians on the medical staff may be contacted to help locate people formerly employed at the mine and verify their status.

An important component of this series of studies is the examination of lung tissue from past employees at the mining operation to analyze by electron microscopy the quantity and type of mineral fibres present. Each of you is in a position to contribute to this component of the study by checking whether your patients have ever worked in the Zonolite Mine and Mill and by making a point of requesting autopsies on any of your patients who die over the next six months who were ever employed by the Zonolite operation, whatever the cause of death. A history of lung disease or death as a result of pulmonary disease is not the critical factor. The team from McGill is most anxious to analyze lung tissue from anyone with the appropriate exposure and a limited autopsy restricted to the lungs is quite sufficient.

The results of this effort promise to contribute a great deal to our knowledge of asbestos-related disease, and you will be kept abreast of developments as the study progresses. To a large extent, the success of this research will depend on your efforts and on your keeping in mind the need to identify former Zonolite employees and obtain tissue samples from their lungs.

Sincerely,

Jerry H. Berke, M.D.

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