

SUPPORTING RESEARCH

Members of Operating Engineers' Local 793 help fund research on asbestos-related cancer

In 2006, Local 793 of the International Union of Operating Engineers decided to donate two cents for every member-hour worked to the Mesothelioma Research Program of Princess Margaret Hospital. Mesothelioma is a deadly form of cancer which can be caused by asbestos. CSAO asked Mike Gallagher, Business Manager for Local 793, about the donation plan.

CSAO: What motivated Local 793 to do this?

Gallagher: A few years ago, I saw a presentation by one of the surgeons at Princess Margaret Hospital. We learned that the construction trades, including the Operating Engineers, were reporting more deaths due to asbestos-related diseases. The message hit home in 2002 when one of our longtime members, Kenneth Gardiner, died from

mesothelioma. Gardiner used to dismantle and clean the brake parts of cranes he was operating. It was later determined that the parts contained asbestos.

How much have you donated?

A total of \$310,555 since December 2007.

Do you have advice for others considering something similar?

I would suggest that you get involved in the program because mesothelioma is now one of the leading causes of death in construction and early detection can help slow the disease.

What feedback have you received from members?

The feedback has been excellent. Operating Engineers have traveled from Ottawa, Thunder Bay, and Windsor to get the testing done



at Princess Margaret. Judging from the comments at our union meetings, members seem to appreciate the fact that the union is doing something to address an important health concern. ☺

Editor's note: To learn how to support the mesothelioma research program, call Christina Lebesis at the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation: 416-946-2138.

BEEN EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS?

If you have been exposed to asbestos, you may qualify for a free test to check for lung cancer and mesothelioma—a cancer which can be caused by asbestos.

Princess Margaret Hospital's Mesothelioma Research Program is doing a study on early detection of mesothelioma. If you qualify to participate, you're given a free CT scan (or "CAT scan") which can detect abnormalities.

No injections or medications are needed. The radiation dose from the scan is less than 2 rads—about the same as for a two-view chest x-ray.

To qualify for the study, you must

- be 30 years or older
- have had exposure to asbestos at least 20 years ago or have documented pleural plaques
- be in general good health

- have had no cancers (except non-melanotic skin cancer).

Early detection is the best hope for those with mesothelioma. Typically, the cancer takes many years to develop, but once it does, it is usually fatal. If caught early enough, patients can benefit from treatment options and increase their chance of survival.

To learn more, call the program at 416-340-5686. ☺