

## Message from Executive Director Elizabeth Ann Paul USC - Dr. Gill Check Presentation

As Executive Director of the Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America, I am excited to share this newsletter with you. This newsletter will be published quarterly and will bring you the latest in news about mesothelioma research and the activities of the Foundation.

I'd like to thank my fellow Board Members James W. Kellogg and Jerry Neil Paul as well as the Chairman of the Science and Medical Advisory Board, Dr. Parkash Gill for all of their hard work in the past year to help support our mission: funding research to find a cure for mesothelioma.

The past year has been a busy one. Dr. Gill's research at the Mesothelioma Laboratory at the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center has continued and seen many promising developments. For more details on Dr. Gill's research, please see our Mesothelioma Research Update below.

There have also been developments on the legislative front. Our own Board Member James W. Kellogg successfully lobbied the California State Assembly and Senate to make the first week in June "Mesothelioma Awareness Week." His hard work will help raise awareness of this disease and the need to work towards a cure.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of the donors and volunteers whose generosity and hard work have been invaluable over the past year. A special thanks to Cindy Hamilton, Bob Balganorth and Steve Steele for their tireless efforts with the Roger Hamilton Memorial Golf Event and Clay Shoot that generated \$110,000, Nico Ferraro from Local 230 and Tom Lemmon President of the San Diego Building Trades for their help in obtaining donations from John Lyons Memorial Foundation, and District Council 16 for their help with their Annual Golf Invitational and Aim to Cure Clay Shoot.



From Left, Sid Stolper, James W. Kellogg, Dr. Parkash Gill, Elizabeth Paul and Jerry Neil Paul

November 6, 2007

For the fifth year in a row the United Association of the Southern California Pipetrades District Council 16 presented a check to Dr. Parkash Gill to help support his mesothelioma cancer research. District Council 16 Business Manager Sid Stolper, Director of Organizing John Ferruccio, Charlie Hazard and U.A. International Representative James W. Kellogg presented the \$100,000 check at a recent meeting held in Los Angeles. Dr. Gill and his team of doctors expressed their gratitude to everyone in attendance for all their hard work in supporting mesothelioma research, especially in light of recent cuts in Federal research funding. They also gave a presentation on their research, which we report on elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America appreciates all the hard work and tireless efforts put in by the fundraisers this year. Without their dedication and support, research would not be able to progress as much as it has. Thank you!

**If you or a loved one  
has been diagnosed  
with this horrible disease  
and would like  
help, please call  
1-800-909-MESO (6376)  
and speak with one of  
our volunteers.**

## Mesothelioma Research Update

The Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America has a mission: fund research that will lead to the quickest cure for mesothelioma. Mesothelioma is a cancer of the body's mesothelial tissue linings. It can affect the pleura (lung cavity), the peritoneum (abdominal cavity), or the pericardium (heart sac).

Since 2001, the Foundation has funded the opening of the Mesothelioma Laboratory under the supervision of board certified oncologist Dr. Parkash Gill at the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center in Los Angeles. With the continued support of MRFA, Dr. Gill received FDA approval to begin clinical trials on a new mesothelioma treatment drug called Veglin. Veglin is not chemotherapy or radiation. It is taken in a syringe shot form at home and attacks only the blood vessels that feed the malignant tumor.

Veglin began Phase II of the clinical trials in July 2004, and it appears that Veglin is capable, in some patients, of stopping the tumor from growing and also stopping the fluid buildup in the lungs, a typical symptom of mesothelioma. Participants in the trials report minimal side effects, only hot flashes.

Dr. Gill recently announced that there are openings for forty-five more patients in his trials. There are fifteen spots for patients pre-

viously treated with chemotherapy and thirty for newly diagnosed patients. For these newly diagnosed patients, Veglin can be used as a first line treatment in combination with standard treatments like chemotherapy. Dr. Gill also announced that he is in negotiations to expand his trials to other facilities across the country including U.C. Davis here in California and the University of Chicago in Illinois.

We also have exciting news about two new drugs, EphB4 and AXL. EphB4 is an anti-angiogenesis drug that has shown great promise in laboratory studies and will be submitted for FDA Phase I clinical trials in May of 2008. EphB4 is made up of two active proteins that block blood flow to cancerous tumors preventing the tumors from growing to an uncontrollable size. A lab in San Diego, CA is now mass-producing the proteins needed to make the drug available to mesothelioma patients. The Foundation and its team of researchers have very high hopes for EphB4. The second drug AXL is a very recent discovery by researchers at the USC/Norris Cancer Center and has proved to attack the proteins outside of the tumor cells in preliminary studies. We are encouraged by these developments and hope to have more information on their progress in our next newsletter.

## Legislative News

A bill seeking to ban all production and use of asbestos in the United States and to promote further investigation into disease resulting from exposure, as well as methods to measure and analyze the mineral, was placed on the Senate calendar after unanimous passage in committee. The Committee on Environmental and Public Works passed S.742, the Ban Asbestos in

America Act of 2007, on August 2. The bill, which was introduced in March by Senator Patty Murray, D-Wash., received unanimous support from her colleagues. The bill requires the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to conduct a study investigating the science of asbestos disease, methods for measuring and analyzing asbestos and labeling practices for asbestos.

Here in California, the California State Assembly and Senate have passed a bill making the first week in June "Mesothelioma Awareness Week." This bill will help raise awareness of the disease and the need to find a cure. Thanks for Board Member and U.A. International Representative James W. Kellogg for his hard work lobbying to get this bill passed.

## Vehicle Donation Program

### Donate Your Used Vehicle—Running or Not—and Receive a Tax Deduction!

The Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America began its vehicle donation program last year. We have been very pleased with the generous donations we have received and are excited to be continuing the program.

We are able to take donations of all types of vehicles, whether they are running or not, including cars, trucks, motorhomes, snowmobiles, jet-skis and boat. In exchange for donating your vehicle and helping support mesothelioma research, you receive a tax deduction. The only requirement is that you have a clear title in your possession.

These types of donations allow the donor



the opportunity to contribute more to our organization while helping themselves out at the same time. 100% of the money we receive for these donations goes directly to mesothelioma research because 100% of the operating expenses and costs are funded by Executive Board Members Jerry Neil Paul and

Elizabeth Paul.

If you would like to make a vehicle donation, please call one of our volunteers at 800-909-MESO (6376) or you may donate online by visiting our website at: [www.mesorfa.org](http://www.mesorfa.org). Just click on Support Mesorfa to make your donation.

## East Coast Meets West Coast:

### Mesothelioma Research Foundation Teams with Yale Cancer Medical Center

Mesothelioma patients throughout the United States, overwhelmed with decisions that need to be made regarding their health, call the Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America (MESORFA). Some of these cancer patients have already been treated with chemotherapy, surgery, and even radiation and are left feeling as though there is nowhere else to turn; others have been recently diagnosed and are now searching for some hope.

In the past, the MESORFA referred these patients to Dr. Parkash Gill at USC Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. However, patients who are on the east coast are unable to make the trek across the U.S. to

see Dr. Parkash Gill. In an endeavor to meet the needs of the patients we are now working with a team of doctors on the East Coast at the Yale Cancer Medical Center. Dr. Scott Gettinger, a medical oncologist in the Thoracic Oncology Program (TOP) at Yale is working on a Phase I clinical trial of an orally administered histone deacetylase inhibitor called PXD101 that the Curagen pharmaceutical company is sponsoring. Prior studies with a similar agent have reported responses in patients with metastatic mesothelioma.

Acceptance for this clinical trial depends upon the patient's condition and health history. Although not the same for every patient the most common side effects of PXD101 include

being tired and/or fatigued, along with low-grade nausea, which can be treated with medications. These side effects have proven to be minimal and less severe than the effects of chemotherapy or radiation. This trial is appealing in cases where all other standard line therapies have failed and no other treatment options are available.

The Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America looks forward to working closely with the Yale Cancer Center along with other hospitals throughout the United States in treating patients with mesothelioma and finding a cure for this horrible disease.

Please remember The Mesothelioma Research Foundation of America in your Will

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