

# Mesothelioma | Legal and Education Guide



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The attorney responsible for this advertisement is: Kerry L. Steigerwalt  
Principal Office: 3555 Fourth Avenue San Diego, CA 92103

# An Introduction to Mesothelioma



## What is Mesothelioma?

Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos fibers. It causes the linings around the lungs, heart, and intestines to develop cancerous tumors which are extremely difficult to detect, diagnose, and treat. Experts estimate that 3,000 people will suffer some form of asbestos-related disease this year.

## How does asbestos cause Mesothelioma?

When asbestos is inhaled or ingested, it travels through the body and usually settles in the lungs, stomach, intestines, or heart. From there, the jagged, microscopic shards pierce the external lining of these organs that secretes the fluid which allows them to move and function properly. This causes these delicate tissues to develop cancerous tumors that often go undetected for decades.

## Why is Mesothelioma so deadly?

Mesothelioma is deadly because it takes an extremely long time to develop, is often confused with less deadly conditions, and does not respond well to conventional treatment.

## Did asbestos companies know the dangers of their product?

Asbestos has been used for centuries as insulation, flame protection, and as a building material. As early as the days of Ancient Greece and Rome, people connected the fact that those who worked with asbestos suffered breathing problems and often died very early in life. In the modern era many asbestos manufacturers understood the risks their products posed to both their workers and the public at large, but often went to great lengths to conceal any potential dangers.

## Who is at risk of developing Mesothelioma?

Those most at danger of developing Mesothelioma are people who worked directly with asbestos: miners, construction workers, shipbuilders, mechanics, or anyone who worked with insulating materials. Family members of the workers were also put at extreme risk, as the tiny asbestos particles tended to cling to clothing and hair follicles and were unknowingly transferred to loved ones.

## What can be done if I developed Mesothelioma as a consequence of asbestos?

Asbestos-related lawsuits have produced some of the largest verdicts in American history. These industries are being held accountable for their reckless disregard of public safety and have been forced to pay hefty settlements for the incalculable damage inflicted upon innocent victims by their dangerous products. If you or your loved ones have endured the heartbreak of Mesothelioma or another asbestos-related illness, you may be entitled to compensation based on your profound physical and emotional pain.

## There are three types of Mesothelioma

### Pleural Mesothelioma

Pleural Mesothelioma affects the linings around the lungs. Inhaled asbestos particles enter the lungs and pierce the delicate tissue, making breathing and blood circulation difficult. 75% of all Mesothelioma cases are pleural Mesothelioma.

### Peritoneal Mesothelioma

Peritoneal Mesothelioma is the second most common type of the disease. If a person inhales or ingests asbestos particles they can become lodged in the digestive tract and cause the organs to fail to produce the lubrication necessary for movement.

### Pericardial Mesothelioma

The least common form of Mesothelioma is Pericardial Mesothelioma. This extraordinarily rare cancer affects the lining around the delicate sack that contains the heart muscle. As asbestos particles circulate through the bloodstream, they shred the protective layer of tissue around the heart and inhibit proper cardiac muscle contraction over time.

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# Mesothelioma Symptoms

Mesothelioma is one of the most notoriously difficult cancers to diagnose. Not only does it have an extremely protracted latency period between primary exposure and initial symptoms, it also causes symptoms that are often confused with less deadly conditions.

## Pleural Mesothelioma Symptoms

- Constant chest pain
- Chronic cough that worsens over time
- Coughing up blood
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Lung infection (pneumonia, bronchitis)
- Shortness of breath
- Swollen lymph nodes
- Loss of appetite and weight loss
- Wheezing

## Peritoneal Mesothelioma Symptoms

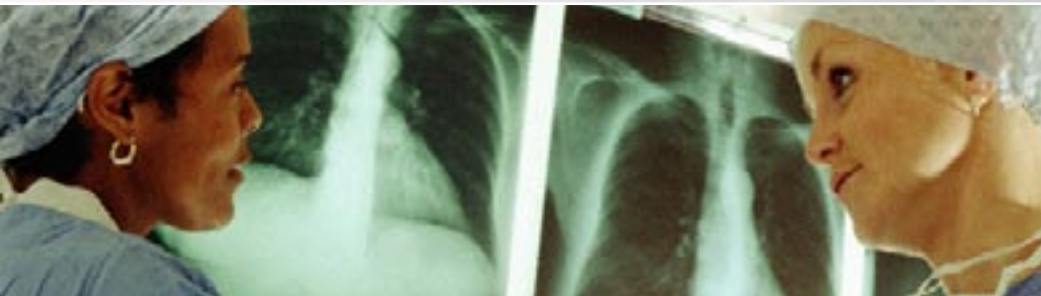
Peritoneal Mesothelioma causes similar symptoms, but it attacks the digestive tract. Mesothelioma of the stomach or intestines is responsible for:

- Weight loss - although waist may increase in size.
- Pain or swelling in the abdomen - fluid retention or tumor growth.
- Bowel obstruction - blockage in the small or large intestine.
- Anemia
- Fever



## Many different occupations were once directly exposed to asbestos, including:

- Automotive mechanics
- Boiler makers
- Bricklayers
- Building Inspectors
- Carpenters
- Electricians
- Insulators
- Iron workers
- Laborers
- Longshoremen
- Maintenance workers
- Merchant marines
- Millwrights
- Painters
- Plasterers
- Plumbers
- Roofers
- Sheet metal workers
- Tile setters
- Welders



# Treatment Options

Although there are many treatments available for various types of cancers, the unfortunate reality is that Mesothelioma is usually a terminal diagnosis. Chemotherapy and radiation treatments are useful ways to combat other types of cancers, but these cancers usually have younger tumors or manifest in less immediately critical parts of the body.

Surgery is also an option for Mesothelioma victims, as doctors can remove the diseased mesothelium that surrounds the lungs, gastrointestinal tract, or heart. How-

ever, this act is drastic and usually only performed to alleviate some of the pain caused by the disease.

There is hope, however. Doctors are developing new and exciting treatments each day that offer promise for victims of this terrible disease. A revolutionary new process called Immunotherapy introduces “healthy viruses” into the body that may potentially increase the immune system’s ability to attack and destroy cancerous tumors.

Another procedure called Heated Intraoperative Intraperitoneal Chemotherapy involves surgery to remove as much of a tumor as possible, followed by heated chemotherapy drugs which are directly injected into the remaining cancerous tissue. While this treatment is still in development today, it could promise victims of Mesothelioma a brighter future tomorrow.

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# Clinical Trials



A clinical trial is a research study that uses volunteers as human “guinea pigs” to test new treatment options for an illness. These trials can involve a number of innovations, from new types and dosages of medications to new styles of revolutionary therapy options. Doctors monitor the participants for signs of therapeutic successes and note any side effects. Enrolling in a clinical trial is a gamble, but the rewards often outweigh the risks.

People elect to participate in clinical trials for a variety of reasons. Many want a more direct involvement in the treatment they receive; others want to take a more active role in helping others with their condition. Some patients with terminal afflictions such as Mesothelioma feel that new treatments could be one of the last viable options available. These brave individuals greatly contribute to the understanding of the condition and further the development of solutions available to medical science for treating Mesothelioma.

Clinical trials proceed through segments or phases. Phase I monitors the effectiveness of an experimental treatment or drug. Reactions and side effects are noted, and preliminary evidence is assembled into manageable data. Phase II expands the number of participants in order to better gauge the occurrence of proper function and side effects. The next stage, phase III, takes data from the two prior stages and compares it to older or current treatments by assigning treatments to random participants in order to discover which one is the most effective. This stage of testing involves more people and often takes place simultaneously at several different treatment facilities. Depending on the results of phase III testing, a drug or treatment is either approved for general use, discontinued due to negligible effects or dangerous consequences, or sent back for further testing. Phase IV monitors the safety of a drug once it is in common use, and provides further information on side effects and related health concerns.

Many drugs and treatments fail in clinical studies for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the side effects are too drastic, other times not enough people respond to the treatment, and at rare times there may be a legal issue with the rights to produce the drug. Failure rates rarely discourage large pharmaceutical or medical companies, for they know if one treatment fails, future successes could help recover losses and most importantly, save countless lives.

## Phase I Test

Tests and monitors the effectiveness of treatment or drug that attempts to treat the condition.

## Phase II Expand

Expands the number of participants to better gauge the occurrence of proper function and side effects.

## Phase III Compare

Compares data from phases I and II to older or current treatments to see which one is the most effective.

## Phase IV Monitor

Monitors the safety of a drug once it is in common use, and provides further information on side effects and related health concerns.



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# Understanding Your Legal Rights

When it comes to pursuing justice against powerful industries who jeopardize consumer safety in the ongoing battle for profitability, it is absolutely imperative that you understand your legal rights. If you are facing something as devastating as a Mesothelioma diagnosis, you have a right to seek answers about why you were not forewarned of the dangers of asbestos, and you have the right to seek reparations for your pain. If you are a grieving family member or the executor of the will of a person who has died from asbestos-related disease or Mesothelioma, you may be eligible to file a claim as well.

Litigation is understandably the last thing that someone wants to confront after the initial shock of an asbestos-related illness. However, exploring your legal rights immediately can help you obtain needed funds to finance aggressive treatment, pay off medical bills incurred during diagnosis, and provide financial security for your family for years to come. You owe it to yourself, your family, and victimized Americans as a whole to explore your legal options and fight for what you deserve.

## Why File a Lawsuit

Mesothelioma is one of the most disastrous yet preventable diseases of the last century. Substantial evidence has emerged proving that the dangers of asbestos exposure have been known since as early as the 1920's. The industry has systematically valued profits over human lives by suppressing such information. This kind of deadly deceit is both immoral and illegal.

A diagnosis of Mesothelioma is a tragic and extremely emotional experience, and the last thing a victim wants to address is legal concerns. However, this is precisely the time when filing a lawsuit is so important, for a successful suit is one of the few ways to fund aggressive treatment strategies and help to alleviate the financial burden of medical expenses that pile up during treatment and diagnosis. A successful suit can force the asbestos industry and other negligent corporations to accept responsibility while providing a financial safeguard for you and your family.

Not only does successful litigation provide victims with a tangible

way to fight the greed of negligent corporations and help bring about systematic change in the asbestos industry, but it also creates financial security for paying medical bills and providing for one's family. Urgent action is vitally important – not only are victims left with a limited amount of time after diagnosis, but statutes of limitations can prevent the claim from being filed at all.

If you are suffering, it is important to find an experienced Mesothelioma attorney so that you can get started on your suit as soon as possible. Filing asbestos-related claims is a complex undertaking, and a solid link between illness and exposure must be proven. It takes extraordinary focus and incredible compassion to fight decades of systematic lies in order to win needed funds for a victim and to provide for their family's security. If you have been diagnosed with Mesothelioma or have lost a loved one to the disease, don't hesitate to call a lawyer today - before it is too late to get what you deserve.

## Time Constraints

Time is especially critical when dealing with a heartbreaking diagnosis of Mesothelioma or any other asbestos-related disease. Because of the progression of the cancer after diagnosis, there is little time to waste before preparing a sound lawsuit that can help secure the compensation needed to offset medical expenses and provide financial security for the family as well.

Though no one wants to deal with legal issues so soon after a traumatic diagnosis or the untimely death of a

loved one, it is absolutely imperative that you contact an experienced Mesothelioma lawyer as soon as possible. This sense of urgency is compounded by varying statutes of limitations that require that you file your claim within a few years of a Mesothelioma diagnosis. Missing out on this window of opportunity could be disastrous for families and victims already reeling from the shock of the devastating disease.

# Mesothelioma Specialists

Oncologists are doctors who spend their entire careers attempting to understand, treat and prevent cancers of all types. These dedicated medical professionals are devoted to alleviating the suffering of victims afflicted with this devastating disease.

Unfortunately, a cancer such as Mesothelioma is so rare that doctors who specialize in diagnosing and treating it are difficult to find. Mesothelioma is poorly understood by many in the medical community, and unless a doctor is a specialist in the field, it is unlikely that it will be diagnosed and treated properly.

Facing a Mesothelioma diagnosis can be daunting, but victims should not give up hope. New treatments are being explored each day, and as long as there are dedicated oncologists and other specialists working diligently to battle the disease, the future will continue to brighten for Mesothelioma victims worldwide.

James W. Ballard, MD  
Birmingham, AL

Robert Cameron, MD  
Los Angeles, California  
Phone: 1-310-794-7333

David Jablon, MD  
San Francisco, CA  
Phone: 1-415-885-3882

Theirry Jahan, MD  
San Francisco, CA  
Phone: 1-415-567-5581

Mark Cullen, MD  
New Haven, CT

Jack A. Elias, MD  
New Haven, CT  
Phone: 1-203-785-4163

Michael Grey, MD  
Farmington, CT

Cardiothoracic Therapy  
New Haven, CT  
Phone: 1-203-785-2699

Michael Kashgarian, MD  
New Haven, CT  
Phone: 1-203-785-2750

Carrie A. Redlich, MD, M.P.H.  
New Haven, CT  
Phone: 1-203-737-2817

Ronald Ponn, MD  
New Haven, CT

Armed Forces Institute of Pathology  
Washington, DC 20306

Paul Sugarbaker, MD  
Sugarbaker Oncology Associates, P.C.  
110 Irving St., NW  
Washington, DC 20010  
Phone: 202-877-3908

Lary A. Robinson, MD  
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center &  
Research Institute At The University of  
South Florida  
12902 Magnolia Dr.  
Tampa, FL 33612

John Ruckdeschel, MD  
H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center  
Tampa, FL 33612-9497

Richard Kraiden, MD  
Pulmonary Pathologist  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
Boston, MA 02114

David Sugarbaker, MD  
Dana Farber Cancer Institute &  
Brighams & Womens Hospital  
75 Francis Street  
Boston, MA 02115

Harvey Pass, MD  
Karmanos Cancer Institute  
Detroit, MI  
313-745-8746

Gregory P. Kalemkerian, MD  
Clinical Associate Professor, Depart-  
ment of Internal Medicine  
Co-Director of Thoracic Oncology  
Cancer Center Member  
University of Michigan Comprehensive  
Cancer Center/Ann Arbor, MI  
Phone: (734) 936-5281

Arkadiusz Dudek, M.D., Ph.D.  
Assistant professor of medicine  
Phone: 612-624-0123  
Email: dudek002@umn.edu

Brian Loggie, MD  
Creighton University Medical Center  
Cancer Center, Suite 2321  
601 N. 30th Street  
Omaha, NE 68131  
Phone: 402-280-5009

Manjit Bains, MD  
Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer  
Center  
1275 York Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Philippe A. Chihanian, MD  
Mt. Sinai Hospital  
5 East 98 St.  
New York, NY 10029  
212-241-6368

David Ilson, MD  
Borys Mychalczak, MD  
Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center  
New York, NY

Valerie Rusch, FACS  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer  
Center  
1275 York Avenue  
New York, NY 10021  
Phone: 212-639-5873  
email: ruschv@mskcc.org

Stephen Rush, MD  
North Shore University Hospital  
Manhasset, NY

Roman Perez-Soler, MD  
NW York University Kaplan Cancer  
Center  
550 First Avenue  
New York, NY 10016  
212-263-8043  
212-263-6485

Robert N. Taub, MD  
Professor of Clinical Medicine, Pro-  
gram Director  
Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital  
Atchley Pavilion Room 907  
161 Fort Washington Ave.  
New York, NY

David H. Harpole, Jr., MD  
Associate Professor of Surgery  
Director of General Thoracic Surgery  
(DUMC)  
Chief of Cardiothoracic Surgery  
Appointments (919) 684-3683

Larry R. Kaiser, MD  
University of Pennsylvania  
4th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19104.  
Phone: 215-662-7538  
Email: Kaiser@mail.med.upenn.edu

Joseph S. Friedberg, MD  
Chief of Thoracic Surgery, Thomas  
Jefferson University Hospital  
Philadelphia, PA  
Phone: (215) 955-2996 or 1-800-JEFF-  
NOW (1-800-533-3669)

David Etensohn, MD  
Pulmonary Medicine  
109 Beechwood Avenue  
Pawtucket, RI

David Kern, MD  
Memorial Hospital of RI  
Occupational Health Clinic  
111 Brewster Street  
Pawtucket, RI 02860

John Pella, MD  
St. Joseph Hospital  
Pulmonary Fatima Unit  
200 High Service Avenue  
North Providence, RI 02904

S.T. Sambandan, MD  
Oncologist  
1180 Hope Street  
Bristol, RI

Anthony Testa MD  
Oncologist  
100 Highland Avenue  
Providence, RI 02904

James Bradof, MD  
406 Tiffany Park  
Gaffney, SC

Spencer McCachren, MD  
Thompson Cancer Center  
Knoxville, TN  
423-541-1812

W. Roy Smythe, MD  
Department of Thoracic and Cardio-  
vascular Surgery  
University of Texas, MD Anderson  
Cancer Center  
1515 Holcombe Blvd., Box 39, Rm.  
R7.2215  
Houston, Texas 77030  
Phone: 713-792-6933

Claire Verschraegen, MD  
Department Of Clinical Investigation  
University of Texas, MD Anderson  
Cancer Center  
1515 Holcombe Blvd., Box 39, Rm.  
R7.2215  
Houston, Texas 77030  
Phone: 713-792-7959

Samuel Hammer, MD  
700 Lebo Road  
Bremerton, WA 98310  
360-479-7707

Eric Vallieres, MD  
Box 356310  
1959 NE Pacific  
Seattle, WA 98195-6310  
Phone: 206-543-3093

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# Cancer Centers

Because Mesothelioma is a relatively rare cancer, there are relatively few treatment centers in the United States and around the world devoted entirely to this particular disease. Unfortunately this means that there are few centers that Mesothelioma victims can directly approach for specific help.

However, most major hospitals have sophisticated oncology (cancer) departments and can provide the services and treatments necessary for improving the quality of life of Mesothelioma victims once they have been properly diagnosed.

Cancer centers usually provide a number of different services. Most centers concentrate their resources on treating or managing the different types of cancer of their patients, as well as providing spiritual, emotional, and legal counseling for victims and their families. These facilities are full of love and compassion, and each staff member is devoted to alleviating the suffering of patients afflicted with this devastating disease, in every way possible.

UAB Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Birmingham, AL  
Patient Information: 1-800-UAB-0933

Arizona Cancer Center, Tucson, AZ  
Patient Information: 1-800-622-COPE

Beckman Research Institute  
Duarte, CA  
Patient Information: 1-800-826-HOPE

Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer  
Center  
UCLA, Los Angeles, CA  
Patient Information: 1-310-825-5268

USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer  
Center  
Los Angeles, CA  
Patient Information: 1-800-USC-CARE

Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer  
Center  
UC Irvine, Orange, CA  
Patient Information: 1-714-456-8200

Cancer Center & Cancer Research  
Institute  
UCSF, San Francisco, CA  
Patient Information: 1-800-888-8664

Rebecca and John Moores Cancer  
Center  
UCSD, San Diego, CA  
Patient Information: 1-858-822-1222

University of Colorado Cancer Center  
Denver, CO  
Patient Information: 1-800-473-2288

Yale Cancer Center  
New Haven, CT  
Patient Information: 1-203-785-4095

District of Columbia  
Lombardi Cancer Research Center/  
Georgetown University Medical Center  
Washington, DC  
Patient Information: 1-202-784-4000

The Moffitt Cancer Center  
& Research Institute  
University of South Florida, Tampa, FL  
Patient Information: 1-888-663-3488  
Cancer Research Center  
University of Chicago, Chicago, IL  
Patient Information: 1-888-824-0200

Robert H. Lurie Cancer Center  
Northwestern University, Chicago, IL  
Patient Information: 1-312-908-5250

Johns Hopkins Oncology Center  
Baltimore, MD  
Patient Information: 1-800-507-9952

Greenebaum Cancer Center  
University of Maryland, MD  
Patient Information: 1-800-492-5538

Brigham and Women's Hospital  
Boston, MA  
Patient Information: 1-617-732-5922

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute  
Boston, MA  
Patient Information: 1-800-320-0022

Comprehensive Cancer Center  
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Patient Information: 1-800-865-1125

Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer  
Institute  
Detroit, MI  
Patient Information: 1-800-KARMA-  
NOS

University of Minnesota Cancer Center  
Minneapolis, MN  
Patient Information: 1-888-226-2376

Mayo Clinic Cancer Center  
Rochester, MN  
Patient Information: 1-507-284-2111

Creighton University Medical Center  
Omaha, NE  
Patient Information: 1-402-280-4100

Norris Cotton Cancer Center  
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center  
Lebanon, NH  
Patient Information: 1-800-639-6918  
Cancer Research Center  
Albert Einstein College of Medicine  
Bronx, NY  
Roswell Park Cancer Institute  
Buffalo, NY  
Patient Information: 1-800-ROSWELL

NYU Cancer Institute  
New York, NY  
Patient Information: 1-212-263-6485

Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer  
Center  
New York, NY  
Patient Information: 1-800-525-2225

Herbert Irving Comprehensive  
Cancer Center, Columbia University  
New York, NY  
Patient Information: 1-212-305-9327

Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer  
Center  
UNC, Chapel Hill, NC  
Patient Information: 1-919-966-3036

Duke Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Durham, NC  
Patient Information: 1-888-ASK-DUKE

Comprehensive Cancer Center  
Wake Forest University  
Winston-Salem, NC  
Patient Information: 1-800-446-2255

Case Western Reserve University and  
University Hospitals of Cleveland  
Cleveland, OH  
Patient Information: 1-216-844-8797

Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital &  
Richard J. Solove Research Institute  
Ohio State University, Columbus, OH  
Patient Information: 1-800-293-5066

Abramson Cancer Center  
University of Pennsylvania  
Philadelphia, PA  
Patient Information: 1-800-789-PENN

Fox Chase Cancer Center  
Philadelphia, PA  
Patient Information: 1-888-FOX  
CHASE

University of Pittsburgh Cancer  
Institute  
Pittsburgh, PA  
Patient Information: 1-800-237-4PCI

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center  
Houston, TX  
Patient Information: 1-800-392-1611

San Antonio Cancer Institute  
San Antonio, TX  
Patient Information: 1-210-616-5590

Vermont Cancer Center  
University of Vermont, Burlington, VT  
Patient Information: 1-802-656-4414

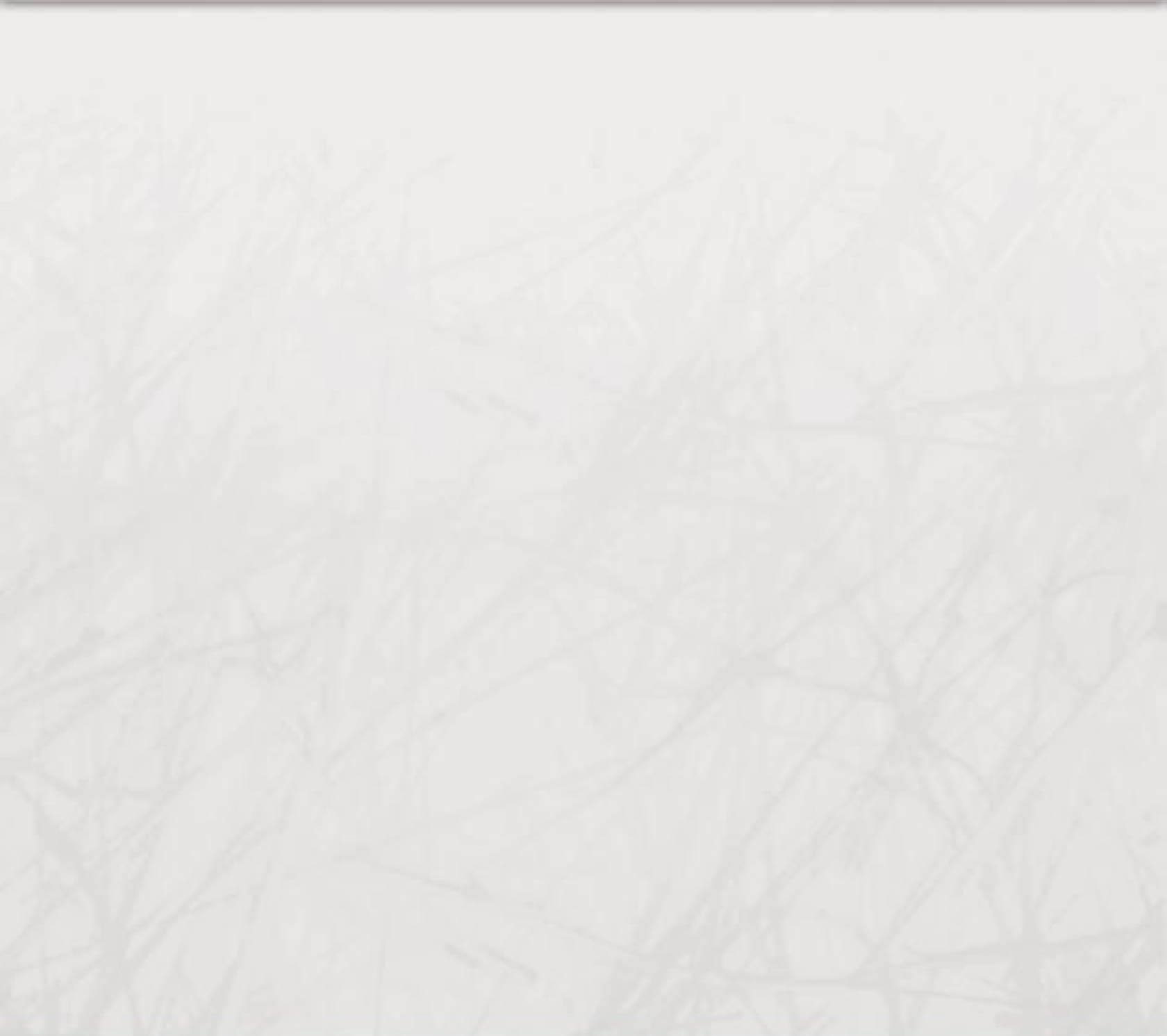
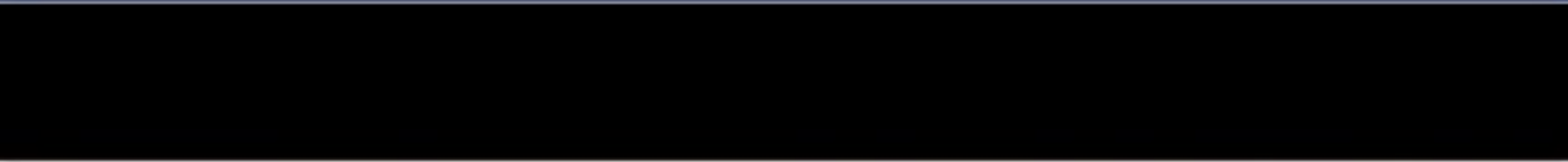
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research  
Center  
Seattle, WA  
Patient Information: 1-206-667-5000

Seattle Cancer Care Alliance  
Seattle, WA  
Patient Information: 1-206-288-1024

Comprehensive Cancer Center  
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI  
Patient Information: 1-800-622-8922

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