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December 19, 2008

**The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences Receives
\$2.1 Million Asbestos Research Grant**
*Environmental Protection Agency Awards Organization Funding
To Study Inhaled Vermiculite Fiber*

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C. – The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences (www.thehamner.org) has announced that it has received a contract totaling \$2.1 million from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to study vermiculite (or Libby amphibole), a mineral resembling mica used in insulation, packing and other processes. A mine near Libby, Montana was the world's leading source of vermiculite for 70 years until its closure in 1990. Asbestos-contaminated vermiculite was shipped from Libby to hundreds of locations across the U.S. and continues to pose public health risks. Occupational exposure to this vermiculite is associated with asbestosis, lung cancer and pleural cancer. Vermiculite mines throughout the world are now regularly tested for asbestos and are expected to sell products that contain no trace of the regulated fibers.

The Hamner study will shed light on the Libby vermiculite phenomenon and provide data on the relative potency of inhaled Libby amphibole fiber compared to amosite fiber, a known fibrogenic amphibole asbestos fiber. Research will also provide data on the inhalability of Libby amphibole fiber and its dosimetry. The three-year study will include assembling an inhalation exposure system for the exposure of fibers to laboratory animals, conducting range-finding and definitive toxicity studies in rats, and analyzing fiber content of rat tissues following exposure. The study will be led by four key personnel at The Hamner: Darol E. Dodd, Ph.D., DABT; Owen R. Moss, Ph.D; Ed Bermudez, M.S., DABT; and Brian A. Wong, Ph.D.

Related Links:

www.thehamner.org
www.epa.gov
www.abtox.org
www.epa.gov/asbestos

Quotes:

“We are extremely pleased to work with the EPA on this important public health concern,” said Dr. William Greenlee, president and CEO at The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences. “The research supported by this award will build on The Hamner’s reputation as a world-class nonprofit research institute dedicated to supporting governmental regulatory decisions on chemical health risks at environmentally-relevant exposure levels.”

About the Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences:

The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences is a nonprofit research organization strategically located on a 56-acre campus in the heart of Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. For more than 30 years, scientists at The Hamner have conducted preeminent research in environmental health sciences and chemical risk assessment. Built upon an integrated systems-biology platform, The Hamner has broadened its mission to include translational research in biopharmaceutical safety, metabolic disorders, respiratory diseases, oncology, and nanosafety. The site also includes an Accelerator, which houses emerging companies and provides opportunities to develop collaborative research and educational programs with academia, industry and government. The Hamner model for translational research and technology development capitalizes on innovation and partnering to discover safer drugs, spin out new companies, and support public health policy. For more information, visit www.thehamner.org or call (919) 558-1200.

About Darol E. Dodd, Ph.D.:

Darol E. Dodd, Ph.D. is a Senior Research Toxicologist at The Hamner Institutes for Health Sciences. He provides leadership and coordination of applied toxicology research projects and supports marketing efforts for new business opportunities for the Institutes. He is also the Director of the Division of Toxicology and Preclinical Studies and leads The Hamner's Research Support Services. With more than 25 years of experience in toxicology and health hazard assessments, Dr. Dodd focuses his expertise in the area of inhalation toxicology. For full bio information on Dr. Dodd, please visit www.thehamner.org/scientists-and-research/scientists.

Keywords:

The Hamner Institutes, Health Sciences, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, Vermiculite, Asbestos, Darol E. Dodd, Owen R. Moss, Ed Bermudez, Brian A. Wong, Libby, Montana, Inhalation Toxicology, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, Public Health, Charles Hamner, William Greenlee

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