



Ankin Law Office LLC

Protecting the Rights of Injured Workers

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Medicare Pilot Program for Montana Asbestos Victims

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In 2009, the Environmental Protection Agency declared a public health emergency arising from the long term asbestos exposure of Libby, Montana residents. The exposure occurred due to the operation of a vermiculite mine in Libby from the 1920s to 1990.

Earlier this month, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services announced that people residing in and near Libby that suffered from certain medical conditions would be eligible for Medicare under the Affordable Care Act's "Exposure to Environmental Health Hazards" provision and could thus participate in a new Medicare Pilot Program for Asbestos-Related Disease.

In order to qualify for the program, applicants must: 1) qualify for Medicare under the Affordable Care Act's "Exposure to Environmental Health Hazards" provision; 2) live in Lincoln or Flathead County, Montana; 3) have Medicare Part A (hospital insurance); and 3) have Medicare Part B (medical insurance).

The program is designed to provide services that Medicare would not usually cover by offering comprehensive, coordinated health care coverage for those detrimentally affected by the asbestos exposure.

As explained in this [NBC news article](#), the pilot program will cover the following services not normally covered by Medicare:

- Special home care services
- Special medical equipment
- Help with travel to get care
- Special counseling, for example, help quitting smoking
- Nutritional supplements
- Prescription drugs not covered by Medicare drug plans (Participants in the Pilot Program must be in a Medicare drug plan to receive this benefit).

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This is a very interesting development and many are carefully following the progress of this innovative pilot program. Asbestos-related illnesses are quite serious—even deadly— and can severely limit the quality of life of those affected. Programs like this one are a promising development and have the potential to positively affect the lives of those suffering from the after effects of [asbestos exposure](#).

Howard Ankin of Ankin Law Office LLC (www.ankinlaw.com) handles [workers' compensation](#) and [personal injury cases](#). Mr. Ankin can be reached at (312) 346-8780 and howard@ankinlaw.com.