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Medical Science Building asbestos exposure incidences petition

March 31, 2017

6th and 7th floor Occupants, Medical Science Building
1 King's College Circle MSB, Toronto, M5S 1A8

March 15th, 2017

To whomever it may concern,

We are writing to notify the occurrence of multiple asbestos exposure incidences on the 6th and 7th floor, Medical Science Building over the past two months. Due to these incidences, lab members (including graduate students, trainees, research associates and professors from LMP, Immunology, IMS and department of Medicine) are exposed to asbestos levels higher than Occupational Health and Safety Act mandated acceptable standards. In spite of five asbestos incidents on 6th and 7th floor in such a short duration, each incident has been treated as an isolated event. More importantly other labs on both floors were kept in the dark about these incidences, until last week (almost 45 days after the incident). All the affected labs are seriously concerned about the unsatisfactory measures taken to remediate the asbestos contamination.

To begin with, members from 4 separate labs (Gaisano, Kaul, Ostrowski and Pei) notified their departments and/or EHS about the incidences in their respective labs. Post abatement, they were told that it is safe to resume work in their labs. However they were not given the test results in spite of several requests. After 3-4 weeks, a fifth incident was reported in Rozakis lab (room 6334) wherein the dust in lab revealed 0.5-5% asbestos fibers (much higher than acceptable limits). LMP informed Rozakis lab members that their space was safe to work, but later it was found to have tested asbestos positive post abatement (360,100 structures/cm2 wherein 1000, 10,000 and 100,000 structures/cm2 are considered low, above background and significant accidental release respectively). The source of asbestos contamination in room 6334 remains unclear, however construction on both the floors continues. This resulted in the lab being shut-down for the last three weeks and lab members had to stop

their experiments abruptly.

These incidences have not only affected our progress in graduate studies/training, but also our trust in EHS and the respective departments to provide us with a safe work environment. The lab members, who were exposed to asbestos, have not been given proper guidance to assess the possible long term consequences on their health. We find it worrisome and reprehensible that EHS and the respective departments have failed to properly manage this serious health hazard violation. Thus we demand following:

- Access to all results of previous asbestos incidence tests and reports of asbestos abatement in MSB.
- As per University of Toronto student's rights and Occupational Health and Safety Act, we are entitled to work space that is safe and hazard free. Thus, lab members should be provided with a lab space that is safe and free of asbestos.

We appreciate your concern and time.

Thanks and Regards,

6th and 7th floor Occupants, Medical Science Building.

(See attachment below for the original petition including signatures)

File attachments:

SGSLetter_MSB_3_15_2017.pdf

Source URL (modified on Jan 19 2018):https://www.utfa.org/content/medical-science-building-asbestos-exposure-incidences-petition