



Urgent Lessons from the Accelerated Silicosis OHN Pilot: The Imperative for a National Occupational Health Service

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The Accelerated Silicosis OHN Pilot successfully demonstrated the value of using occupational health nurses with an occupational physician to support workers exposed to RCS to lodge an ACC claim and to have health assessments through the AS Pathway.

100% of the workers seen in the As OHN Pilot had a claim lodged with ACC and underwent valuable 1:1 training and education on how to mitigate the risks of RCS from both a personal and organisational point of view.

Disease assessment is just one part of managing the risks of airborne hazard exposures. There needs to be a much greater emphasis on the prevention of exposure to all airborne hazards.

The Engineered Stone fabricating businesses in the AS OHN Pilot participated voluntarily. They had information about RCS control and risk management.

We urgently need a national occupational health surveillance service and strategy that is parallel to the health system, to preserve the human right of safe and healthy work.

This needs to be at a minimum:

- Mandatory
- Prevention-focused
- Multi-disciplinary – occupational health providers (OHNs and OPs), general practitioners, crown agencies, workers, unions, communities, workplaces, occupational hygienists, occupational therapists, health and safety professionals, occupational safety providers and specialties such as psychologists
- Working closely with Public Health
- Independent of political change and influence
- A holder of exposure data
- A holder of interventions that are measured for effectiveness
- Work in with WorkSafe, the Environmental Protection Authority, Councils and other authorities for enforcement and decisions about banning existing and new substances
- A culture of caring and community

A strengths-based collaborative effort is the way to maintain the health and safety of New Zealanders at work and through work. Implementing a national occupational health strategy and surveillance service is the best way forward.

Biography:

Join us for a panel discussion to spark collaborative efforts toward enhancing occupational health leadership and management in Aotearoa-New Zealand. Occupational Health Nurses Heidi Börner (AS OHN Pilot) and Victoria Middleton (Dust Diseases Taskforce member, front line experience); Dr. Sage Robinson (President of the Occupational Hygienist Society); and Dr. Alexandra Muthu (ANZSOM, experienced with the medical management of occupational diseases including Accelerated Silicosis) will

share their diverse experiences and urge attendees to engage in meaningful collaboration to improve the health and safety of New Zealand workers.