

## An Introduction to Occupational Disease Intake Clinics



# OHCOW'S HEALTH TEAM

- Executive Director
- Occupational Physicians
- Occupational Health Nurses
- Ergonomists
- Occupational Hygienists
- Client Service Coordinators
- Information Technician (Librarian)

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# WHO CAN USE OUR SERVICES...

- Workers, joint health and safety committees or representatives, unions, employers, health professionals, community groups, legal clinics, students, and members of the public.
  
- OHCOW services provided at no cost

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Occupational Health  
Clinics for Ontario  
Workers Inc.



Centres de santé  
des travailleurs (ses)  
de l'Ontario Inc.

# Definition of Occupational Disease

## **occupational disease** *n.*

A pathological condition resulting from a toxic agent, a hazard, or a repetitive operation encountered during the usual performance of one's occupation.

Stedman's Medical Dictionary, 2002

# Intake Clinics Continued

When we hold Occupational Disease Intake Clinics it is looking at workplace hazards to which workers were exposed such as chemicals, biological, and musculoskeletal.

Most intake clinics are conducted in the same way where questionnaires and or surveys are administered

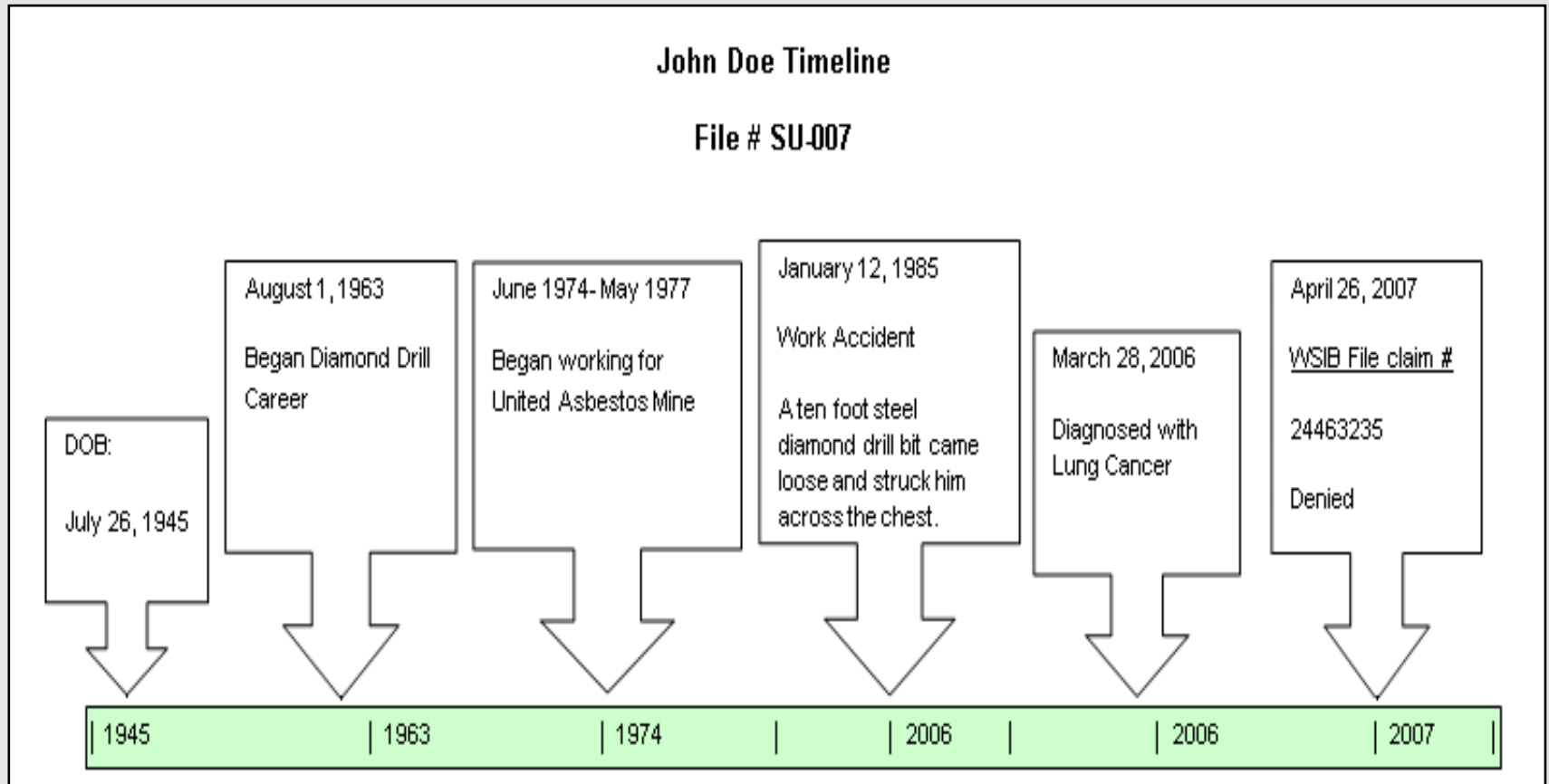
We:

- take the work history & health history of workers
- Record the list of hazards to which the workers were exposed

**Many occupational diseases result from long term exposures to substances or processes some of which are no longer in use. This information helps in determining causal links between current health concerns or diseases and the past and workplace exposures.**

# Timelines can help us link the past with the present

A timeline is formulated to assist the OHCOW team by viewing the client's issue in a chronological order. Timelines offer a visual perspective of the client's history. An example of a client timeline for Lung Cancer:



# When is an Intake Clinic held?

A group of workers sharing the same employer or

- the same workplace or
- workplace exposures,

have reason to believe they have similar and related health concerns.

# Why?

- The United Steel Workers Local 6500 will hold an occupational disease intake clinic May 20, 2009 for anyone who worked at the Iron Ore Plant, which operated from 1953-1993. Widows or descendants of employees of the plant are also invited to attend. The union wants to gather information about exposure to chemicals, the use of personal protection and other matters to help with current and future compensation claims.
- The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) local 353 will hold an occupational disease intake clinic April 23, 2005. Howard McFadden, Chair LU 353 Health & Safety Committee said, “ I can’t stress enough how important this clinic is. If you catch diseases earlier, we can save lives. By coming to this clinic, you are helping your children and grandchildren. By exposing this, we’re forcing government to act, so that our children don’t become sick or die like our brothers today because of work exposures 40 years ago. We want to make the electrical trade a better place to work because of our experience.”
- United Steel workers Local 2251 announced a two day occupational disease clinic to held May 7 & 8, 2008. They were seeing a high rates of cancer and disease as demonstrated to the union by worker concerns, evidence from workers on disease among workers, the fact that Sault Ste. Marie has four times the provincial cancer rate (according to the Algoma Health Unit) and Algoma Steel Inc. (ASI) and (ASI) accounts for approximately three per cent of the provincial occupational disease fatalities (as calculated from WSIB statistics). Between the years of 2001 and 2007, 40 of the occupational disease claims recognized by WSIB have resulted in fatalities.

- And the list goes on.....



# Steps in the Intake Clinic Process

- Registration
- Intake interview
- Body Mapping
- Hazard Mapping
- Physical Examination
- Medical/Records
  - Consents
  - Outcomes

# REGISTRATION

Registration ensures that there is a record of that individual's attendance at the clinic.

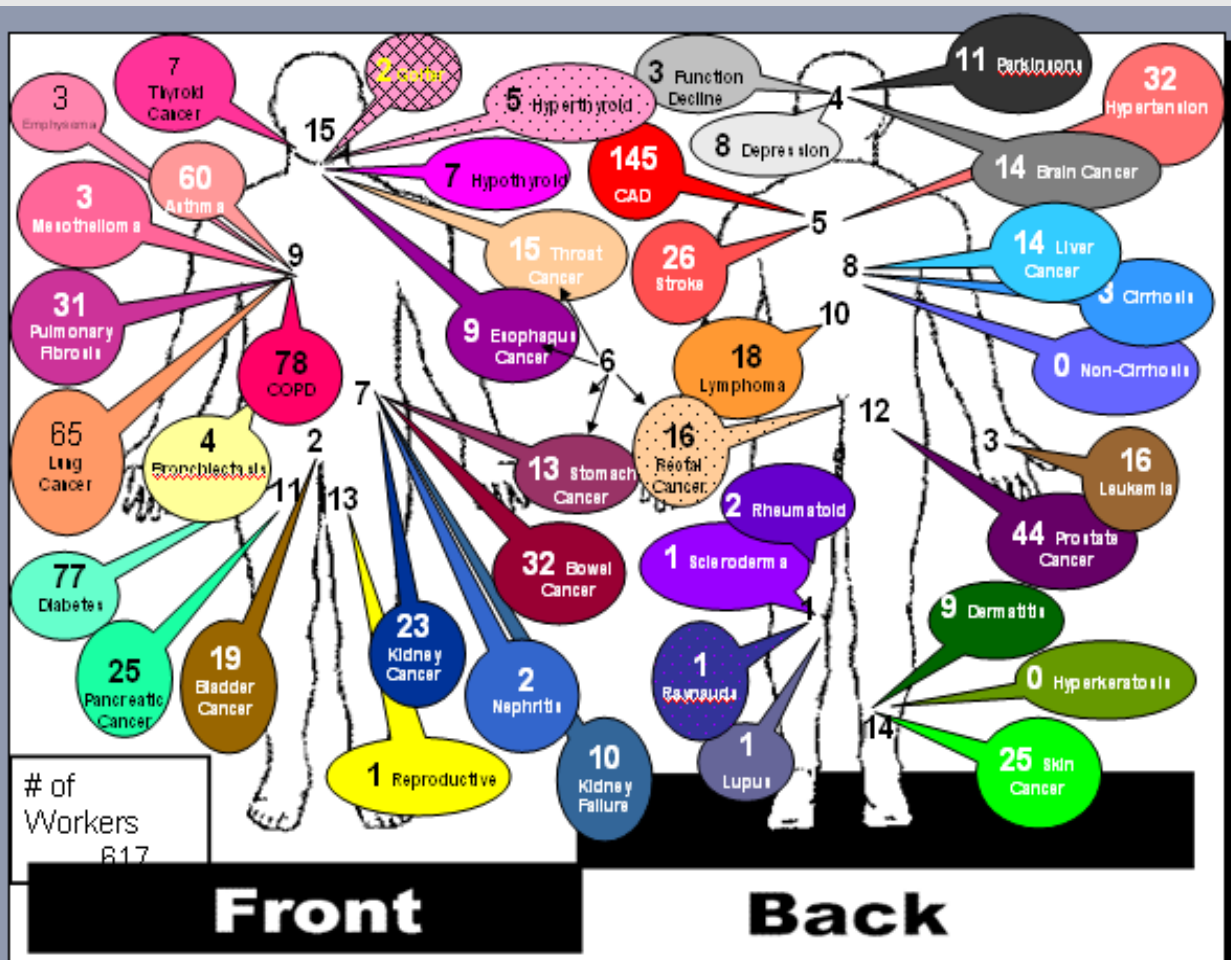
Preliminary information such as name, address and phone numbers are collected, a file opened, given a number. This also ensures that there is an accurate count of clinic attendees.

# INTAKE INTERVIEWS

The worker will be ushered to a private space where an interview will be conducted. The interviewer may be an OHCOW staff, a union member or co-worker from your workplace, a volunteer. There will be focused questions prepared for the interviewer that will assist in obtaining the information needed from the worker. There will also be ample time for the worker to tell the interviewer the story that he/she wants us to know about the work they did and their exposures.

The interviewers will have been provided the education and training that will adequately prepare them to how to ask the questions and why the questions are being asked. Each interviewer will have signed an Oath of Confidentiality.

# BODY MAPPING



## Top 5 Occ. Diseases:

1. Lung Cancer (115 cases)
2. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Diseases (82 cases)
3. Colorectal Cancer (75 cases)
4. Prostate Cancer (69 cases)
5. Asthma (53 cases)

# HAZARD MAPPING

Hazard mapping can provide you with a window into the past of the workplace.. It can chart such things as where chemicals were stored or where ventilation systems were inadequate, what walls were added or removed.

In many cases the work you did in the past and the exposures you had while doing that work are important in determining casual links between current health concerns or diseases and the workplace exposures.





# MEDICAL

- It may be necessary to have the occupational health physician present at the intake session. The occupational health physician is there to make examinations where it is warranted.
- The physician also act as a resource for questions about occupational illness or disease.
- There are certain questions that when answered with a yes or no, depending on the question, the workers is referred directly to the doctor to ensure that all medical liabilities are met.
- There are also times when pulmonary functioning testing is done. Physician approval is needed before approving any medical tests.
- Audio grams (hearing tests) may also be done, by staff when their has been a diagnosis of a disease such as Hand Arm Vibration. (HAVS)

# CONSENTS

**During an intake clinic personal and/or medical information is being collected. How that information will be used and by whom must be clearly stated and the individual must give permission. The collection, use, storage, disclosure and disposal of personal medical information is governed by the *Health Information Protection Act*.**



# OUTCOMES (goals)

**If we identify the occupational diseases , illnesses, injuries, mental illnesses and stresses only then can we prevent or control them**

- Capture the information about the exposures and working conditions in the workplace and the health histories of the workers.
- CLUSTERS
- Database can be compiled to monitor trends and identify research initiative
- Record the list of hazards to which the workers were exposed
- JEM & TEM can be compiled – Job Exposure Matrix, Task Exposure Matrix
- Form 8s that contains the causality information that the worker, advocate, and WSIB need
- Educate - create a plan for disseminating what you have learned and the target audience that needs to know what you have learned. family doctors, advocates, WSIB, our partners.
- Prevention

# QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Thank You



Donna Campbell, Executive Director  
OHCOW Sudbury & Thunder Bay Clinics\*

