

DAILY MAIL ALIMTA CAMPAIGN FOR MESOTHELIOMA SUFFERER

Copied from the Daily Mail

A former dockyard worker with asbestos-related cancer has won his battle for chemotherapy treatment on the NHS - THANKS TO THE DAILY MAIL.

Victor Lamb and his family were delighted when they were told on Thursday that the NHS would fund the £12,000 cost of his chemotherapy using the drug Alimta, which doctors say offers the best chance of extending his life.

Former Carpenter, Mr Lamb, 66, was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a cancer related to asbestos, in July this year and was told he would be lucky if he saw another Christmas. Since July the tumour has spread through his lungs and into his spine and ribs.

Initially, Mr Lamb was told that the £12,000 Alimta treatment would not be available on the NHS - leaving him faced with the prospect of using his life-savings.

However, following a two-month battle, including being featured in the Daily Mail on December 4, a Special Cases Review Panel at Cornwall Primary Care Trust decided to approve funding.

After hearing the news, Mr Lamb said:

"Obviously I'm delighted for myself but I would be more delighted if it could be made available to all patients suffering with mesothelioma.

"I know of lots of people in the same situation as me.

"It's an ongoing process putting your case forward for the drug, which nobody knows about unless someone pushes the boat out.

"I just feel so lucky I had my two daughters, Kelly and Julie, to fight my battle for me. Kelly went to meetings and talked with the PCT (Primary Care Trust). Unless you can fight your own corner or you have other people to help you, you could lose out on the treatment which is terrible."

Mr Lamb, his wife Carol and his daughters have all vowed to continue the fight for mesothelioma sufferers to have free Alimta treatment.

Kelly said:

"After just one treatment Dad seems better in himself. It's really made a difference.

"It's brilliant news that Dad has got his treatment on the NHS now, but it's bitter-sweet news because it's still not available for everybody. We want to keep fighting for others.

"This news has taken a huge pressure off the family, but there are others out there who face the same financial burden of the treatment."

Alimta is free in Scotland, but in England local health authorities decide who receives it because national guidelines on its use have not yet been finalised.

Dr Dennis Yiannakis, Consultant Oncologist at Derriford Hospital, wrote to Cornwall Primary Care Trust, asking it to consider funding Mr Lamb's treatment ~ which they agreed to.

Daughter Kelly said that sufferers like her father, who have worked with asbestos should not be penalised:

"It's by no fault of his own that my Dad worked with asbestos. It was Government-run work so they should step in and help all people who are suffering with mesothelioma for serving their country,~ she said.

Plymouth has been identified as the UK's fourth-largest hot spot for asbestos-related deaths owing to the material's past use for building and the shipping industry at Devonport Dockyard.

The latest figures show 320 people in Plymouth died from mesothelioma caused by asbestos between 1985 and 2004, with cases expected to peak between 2011 and 2015. The condition takes decades to emerge.

Steve Moore, director of commissioning and strategic development at Cornwall PCT, said in a statement:

"Members of the Special Cases Review Panel considered the application on December 5, and agreed to approve funding."

Kelly said she would like any other people in a similar position to contact her for help or advice. Her e-mail address is kezzajay@aol.com