



June 1, 2026

Re: Memorial Statement for Dr. Dario Mirabelli

Dear Dr. Benedetto Teracini,

Thank you for the invitation to contribute to the memorial service for Dr. Mirabelli. I am very sorry I was unable to be there in person to pay my respects. But thank you for considering my written comments for the service:

My knowledge of Dario Mirabelli’s story is a beautiful example of how a pure and noble scientist, quietly investigating phenomena in his own backyard, can expand scientific understanding, prevent future harm around the world, and bring some measure of justice to victims of past technological harm.

My perspective is that of a lawyer with a public health background, who was moving in the 1990s from predominantly solvent-type environmental cases to more occupational and dust-related illness cases, especially those caused by asbestos. Having litigated large “Superfund”-type toxic tort cases in the United States for several years against multi-national companies, I did not consider myself naïve in terms of industry arguments against liability and causation; but that experience in no way prepared me for the universe of well-funded disinformation I and activists and claimants around the world, have to combat in attempting to prevent harm or receive compensation for asbestos related injuries. Mirabelli’s focused work on the cohorts surrounding activities at the Balangero Mine in Northern Italy is in my opinion the most important scientific work in protecting future generations from asbestos and assisting victims of past exposure.

Some history of the asbestos “chrysotile defense” and Balangero is in order. In 1990 a scientific paper was published that reported two mesothelioma cases in the Balangero mining area “suggested” that exposure to chrysotile asbestos was associated with risk of mesothelioma.¹ Unlike much chrysotile asbestos from around the world, the chrysotile at Balangero is “pure” i.e. not found to have naturally occurring amphibole forms of asbestos present. Industry apologists used the finding of only two cases

¹ Piolatto G, Negri E, La Vecchia C, Pira E, Decarli A, Peto J. An update of cancer mortality among chrysotile asbestos miners in Balangero, northern Italy. *Br J Ind Med.* 1990 Dec;47(12):810-4. doi: 10.1136/oem.47.12.810. PMID: 2176805; PMCID: PMC1035286.

We stand for our clients.

HEADQUARTERS

One Court Street
Alton, IL 62002
TEL: (618) 259-2222
FAX: (618) 259-2251

BOSTON

1330 Boylston Street
Suite 400
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
TEL: (617) 405-7015
FAX: (617) 830-9878

LOS ANGELES

100 N. Pacific Coast Highway
Suite 1350
El Segundo, CA 90245
TEL: (310) 322-3555
FAX: (310) 322-3655

MIAMI

255 Alhambra Circle
Suite 320
Coral Gables, FL 33134
TEL: (305) 564-5120
FAX: (305) 675-2829

NEW YORK

112 Madison Avenue
7th Floor
New York, NY 10016
TEL: (212) 784-6400
FAX: (212) 213-5949

SAN FRANCISCO

455 Market Street
Suite 1270
San Francisco, CA 94105
TEL: (415) 536-3986
FAX: (415) 537-4120

ST. LOUIS

231 S. Bemiston Avenue
Suite 525
St. Louis, MO 63105
TEL: (314) 644-6222
FAX: (314) 230-9776



in a mining cohort as evidence that pure chrysotile cannot cause mesothelioma or does so rarely and only at extremely high doses. The fact that Balangero was not known to have tremolite or other forms of asbestos was industry’s explanation for the low number of cases; producers of chrysotile products could continue to blame other forms of amphibole asbestos, most of which by then were bankrupt or out of business. Thus, the early investigative findings at Balangero were used in attempts by industry to deny compensation to mesothelioma victims with chrysotile exposure and blame “the empty chairs”.

Balangero is near the respected University of Turin where Mirabelli and his wonderful colleagues were based. Mirabelli’s 2008 follow-up expanded the mining cohort to include white collar workers and other workers, family members, and environmental exposure cases.² This study and later works on the Balangero mine area exposed the fatal weaknesses of the industry arguments.³ The conservative and rigorously conducted study with medical record and exposure history workups, with a mere eighteen years of additional latency, now found a total of 27 mesotheliomas. Fourteen (14) mesotheliomas were among workers associated with the mine and 13 mesotheliomas in other exposed individuals, including 3 white collar workers. There could be little doubt that pure chrysotile from Balangero was causing this tremendous excess of mesotheliomas. Sadly, subsequent investigations from these knowledgeable Italian researchers have found the case numbers continue to rise.

² Mirabelli D, Calisti R, Barone-Adesi F, Fornero E, Merletti F, Magnani C. Excess of mesotheliomas after exposure to chrysotile in Balangero, Italy. *Occup Environ Med.* 2008 Dec;65(12):815-9. doi: 10.1136/oem.2007.037689. Epub 2008 Jun 4. PMID: 18524838.

³ Turci F, Tomatis M, Compagnoni R, Fubini B. Role of associated mineral fibres in chrysotile asbestos health effects: the case of balangeroite. *Ann Occup Hyg.* 2009 Jul;53(5):491-7. doi: 10.1093/annhyg/mep028. Epub 2009 May 12. PMID: 19435981; Pira E, Pelucchi C, Piolatto PG, Negri E, Bilei T, La Vecchia C. Mortality from cancer and other causes in the Balangero cohort of chrysotile asbestos miners. *Occup Environ Med.* 2009 Dec;66(12):805-9. doi: 10.1136/oem.2008.044693. Epub 2009 Jul 29. PMID: 19643771; Ruff K, Mirabelli D, Magnani C. Scientific journal publishes second erratum regarding false information by scientists funded by asbestos interests. *Epidemiol Prev.* 2016 Mar-Apr;40(2):138-9. English. doi: 10.19191/EP16.2.P138.069. PMID: 27290892; Terracini B, Mirabelli D. Asbestos and product defence science. *Int J Epidemiol.* 2016 Jun;45(3):614-8. doi: 10.1093/ije/dyw136. Epub 2016 Jun 2. PMID: 27255439; Pira E, Romano C, Donato F, Pelucchi C, Vecchia C, Boffetta P. Mortality from cancer and other causes among Italian chrysotile asbestos miners. *Occup Environ Med.* 2017 Aug;74(8):558-563. doi: 10.1136/oemed-2016-103673. Epub 2017 Apr 24. PMID: 28438787; Ferrante D, Mirabelli D, Silvestri S, Azzolina D, Giovannini A, Tribaudino P, Magnani C. Mortality and mesothelioma incidence among chrysotile asbestos miners in Balangero, Italy: A cohort study. *Am J Ind Med.* 2020 Feb;63(2):135-145. doi: 10.1002/ajim.23071. Epub 2019 Nov 14. PMID: 31821579.

We stand for our clients.

HEADQUARTERS

One Court Street
Alton, IL 62002
TEL: (618) 259-2222
FAX: (618) 259-2251

BOSTON

1330 Boylston Street
Suite 400
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
TEL: (617) 405-7015
FAX: (617) 830-9878

LOS ANGELES

100 N. Pacific Coast Highway
Suite 1350
El Segundo, CA 90245
TEL: (310) 322-3555
FAX: (310) 322-3655

MIAMI

255 Alhambra Circle
Suite 320
Coral Gables, FL 33134
TEL: (305) 564-5120
FAX: (305) 675-2829

NEW YORK

112 Madison Avenue
7th Floor
New York, NY 10016
TEL: (212) 784-6400
FAX: (212) 213-5949

SAN FRANCISCO

455 Market Street
Suite 1270
San Francisco, CA 94105
TEL: (415) 536-3986
FAX: (415) 537-4120

ST. LOUIS

231 S. Bemiston Avenue
Suite 525
St. Louis, MO 63105
TEL: (314) 644-6222
FAX: (314) 230-9776



One hugely important aspect of Dr. Mirabelli’s work ethic is that he continued to monitor the scientific and other literature surrounding his publications. He publicly commented in the scientific literature and elsewhere when he felt the need to clarify the facts, science and public health implications of his work. Sometimes only a local scientist who has followed a given site over the years can rebut the half-truths used to deny compensation to victims.

After the publication of the 2008 Mirabelli paper, some industry experts felt the need to change course in their arguments regarding Balangero and what its findings meant regarding “pure” chrysotile causing mesothelioma. As noted above, such experts explained the 1990 finding of only two mesotheliomas as proof that amphibole-free chrysotile does not cause mesothelioma. After the landmark 2008 Mirabelli paper, the defense asserted that a series of occult exposures to amphibole asbestos at the mine had magically appeared. Suddenly, industry was now claiming that the mine was contaminated with tremolite – Dario Mirabelli et al. published that this was in fact false based upon the geology and testing, and also that the low levels of naturally occurring, non-asbestos balangeroite there would not cause the mesotheliomas. Apologists claimed the mine workers seasonally moved to work in amphibole asbestos-laden industries in Turin; a claim investigated and rebutted by Mirabelli et al. after interviewing workers and examining road travel and weather conditions. Industry experts claimed and cited that crocidolite asbestos was brought to this chrysotile mine; Mirabelli et al. reviewed and established and published that the claim was false. Industry experts were claiming that based upon University of Turin lung samples that workers and residents of Balangero had high levels of crocidolite asbestos in their lungs; Mirabelli et al. established that the samples in question were not from Balangero at all, but rather Turin, a city well known for having several crocidolite-based operations over time.⁴

Without Mirabelli’s methodical scientific work, lifetime of experience in that community, and the courage to confront well-funded sources of disinformation, the industry half-truths would have — and might still be — carried the day. Asbestos bans and limitations might not have been achieved and preventable exposures, causing human disease, suffering and death, would have continued for years.

⁴ Magnani C, Mirabelli D, Barone-Adesi F, Calisti R, Compagnoni R, Fubini B, et al. Letter. ebph [Internet]. 2015 [cited 2026 May 30];12(3). Available from: <https://riviste.unimi.it/index.php/ebph/article/view/17796>; Francesco Forastiere et al (24 doctors and scientists), Open Letter, <https://www.rightoncanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Letter-to-Epidemiology-Biostatistics-and-Public-Health-July-17-2015.pdf>

We stand for our clients.

HEADQUARTERS	BOSTON	LOS ANGELES	MIAMI	NEW YORK	SAN FRANCISCO	ST. LOUIS
One Court Street Alton, IL 62002 TEL: (618) 259-2222 FAX: (618) 259-2251	1330 Boylston Street Suite 400 Chestnut Hill, MA 02467 TEL: (617) 405-7015 FAX: (617) 830-9878	100 N. Pacific Coast Highway Suite 1350 El Segundo, CA 90245 TEL: (310) 322-3555 FAX: (310) 322-3655	255 Alhambra Circle Suite 320 Coral Gables, FL 33134 TEL: (305) 564-5120 FAX: (305) 675-2829	112 Madison Avenue 7th Floor New York, NY 10016 TEL: (212) 784-6400 FAX: (212) 213-5949	455 Market Street Suite 1270 San Francisco, CA 94105 TEL: (415) 536-3986 FAX: (415) 537-4120	231 S. Bemiston Avenue Suite 525 St. Louis, MO 63105 TEL: (314) 644-6222 FAX: (314) 230-9776



Well-intentioned lay jurors, without access to this complete and accurate appraisal of the evidence, might choose to believe the injured had not “proved their case” for compensation.

Dr. Mirabelli’s tireless work and legacy has made it possible for future widespread human suffering to be avoided, and to give some measure of justice to the victims and their families. Dario Mirabelli was truly a giant, and I can only hope that his example will inspire future public health advocates to strive for the same lofty goals.

Very Truly Yours,

Gary DiMuzio
Partner



SIMMONS HANLY CONROY
A NATIONAL LAW FIRM

112 Madison Avenue, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10016-7416

We stand for our clients.

HEADQUARTERS

One Court Street
Alton, IL 62002
TEL: (618) 259-2222
FAX: (618) 259-2251

BOSTON

1330 Boylston Street
Suite 400
Chestnut Hill, MA 02467
TEL: (617) 405-7015
FAX: (617) 830-9878

LOS ANGELES

100 N. Pacific Coast Highway
Suite 1350
El Segundo, CA 90245
TEL: (310) 322-3555
FAX: (310) 322-3655

MIAMI

255 Alhambra Circle
Suite 320
Coral Gables, FL 33134
TEL: (305) 564-5120
FAX: (305) 675-2829

NEW YORK

112 Madison Avenue
7th Floor
New York, NY 10016
TEL: (212) 784-6400
FAX: (212) 213-5949

SAN FRANCISCO

455 Market Street
Suite 1270
San Francisco, CA 94105
TEL: (415) 536-3986
FAX: (415) 537-4120

ST. LOUIS

231 S. Bemiston Avenue
Suite 525
St. Louis, MO 63105
TEL: (314) 644-6222
FAX: (314) 230-9776