

## **Calif. Attorney Starts Meso Research Foundation, Gives \$100,000 To Cancer Center**

LOS ANGELES — California attorney Jerry Neil Paul recently announced the formation of the Mesothelioma Foundation of America, an institution that seeks to fund research to find a cure for the asbestos-related disease.

On June 28, Paul, from the Southern California office of the law firm Paul & Hanley, announced that he would provide \$200,000 as start-up funding for the foundation and presented an initial research grant of \$100,000 to the University of Southern California/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center. Paul, named founding director of the new foundation, reported that local financial secretary and treasurer Steve Vealey will assist him in running the organization and will act as executive director.

Also on the foundation board are United Association International representative James W. Kellogg and Medical Advisory Board Chairman and USC/Norris researcher Dr. Parkash Gill, M.D.

### **Genes / Proteins**

Reporting that virtually none of the \$3.36 billion the federal government contributes to the National Institutes of Health for cancer research is spent on clinical trials for mesothelioma patients, Paul said the decision to grant USC/Norris and Gill the initial research funding was due to Gill's expertise in developing cancer therapies for hard-to-treat cancers. Currently, Gill is conducting research on identification of genes/proteins that cause growth of tumor cells and blood vessels feeding the tumors.

To date, Gill has discovered compounds that show great promise in animal models of cancer and has established a comprehensive treatment program for mesothelioma. That program includes a team of pathologists who are specialized in making the correct diagnosis, chest surgeons who may be able to remove the cancer surgically in suitable cases and cancer specialists who will work to develop innovative therapies.

Under the foundation grant, Gill's research will fall into three categories: the direct targeting of tumor cells, therapies that block the growth of blood vessels that nourish tumor cells and therapies that stimulate the body's immune system to fight cancer. Gill expects his research to be in clinical trials by the end of 2001.

The foundation seeks to raise research funds through companies and law firms involved in asbestos litigation, UA unions and spouses, friends and family members of those diagnosed with the disease. For more information on the foundation and how to donate, call Vealey at (888) 908-7778. ■