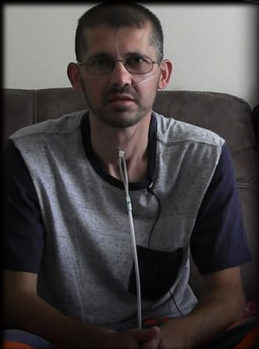
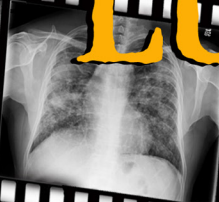


"To the miners out there that's going underground and doing what I want to be doing, just remember, take care of yourself."

Faces of BLACK LUNG II



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Faces of Black Lung II

*This video was produced in memory
of Peyton Mitchell and it is dedicated
to all miners struggling with this
devastating disease.*

Anita L. Wolfe, BA
Public Health Analyst,
Author

Melissa Yancheski, BA
Program Operations Assistant,
Videographer and Photographer

Cara N. Halldin, PhD, MPH
Commander, U.S. Public Health Service
Team Leader

Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Respiratory Health Division
Morgantown, WV

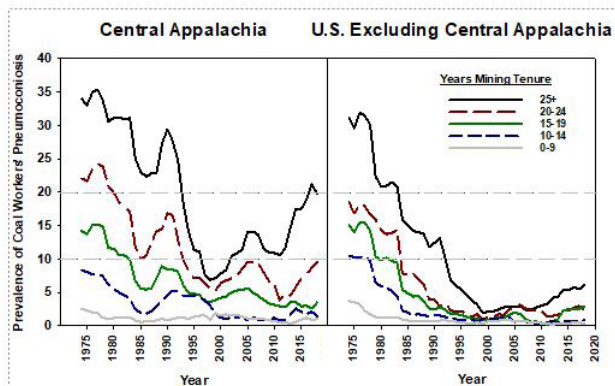
January 2020

Background

In 2018, there were an estimated 83,000 working coal miners in the United States. (MSHA 2018 Data) Each of these miners went to work every day to support their families, but also to help provide the energy that nearly half of Americans relied on for their daily needs. All workers deserve a safe and healthy working environment, including coal miners. The 1969 Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act was intended to protect these miners, in part by setting a permissible exposure limit for respirable coal mine dust as well as a respiratory health surveillance program.

One of the biggest risks to coal miner's health over time is exposure to respirable coal mine dust. Black lung is caused by breathing in too much coal mine dust. Unfortunately, the rates of black lung have been increasing since the late 1990s. For example, as of the filming of this video, 1 in 5 coal miners with 25 or more years of tenure in central Appalachia have black lung. However, NIOSH sees cases of black lung in every state where coal is mined.

Trends in coal workers' pneumoconiosis among working underground coal miners participating in the Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program, in central Appalachia (Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia) and the United States excluding central Appalachia, 1974–2018.



Mobile Health Screening Program

Miners who step into the NIOSH mobile surveillance unit have the opportunity to: provide a detailed work history, complete a respiratory health questionnaire, have their blood pressure checked, have their lung function tested, and receive a chest x-ray. Results are confidentially mailed to the miner's home and are not shared with anyone unless the miner provides a written release for their records.

Since 2006, the mobile surveillance unit has visited every state in the United States where coal is mined (with the exception of Alaska), providing more than 26,000 x-rays to participating coal miners.

Our goal is to reach as many miners as possible and increase participation in this program. Participation in the CWHSP is provided at no cost to the miner. Why? We want to ELIMINATE BLACK LUNG.

Although black lung can be fatal, if it is caught at an earlier stage, a miner can use a right afforded to them by the 1969 Act, referred to as the Part 90 transfer right, to transfer to a less dusty job. The hope is that if a miner with black lung can avoid further coal mine dust exposure the progression of their disease could be reduced. These programs, the black lung screening and Part 90, can only protect your health if you participate.





Ray Anthony Bartley

48 years old.
25 years as an underground coal miner: 18 years as a roof bolter and 7 years doing “a little bit of everything”

“It’s really took a toll on me.”

“If I have to do anything, I have to be on oxygen.”

“Do I have any regrets about working in the mines? No. I didn’t think I would get sick.”

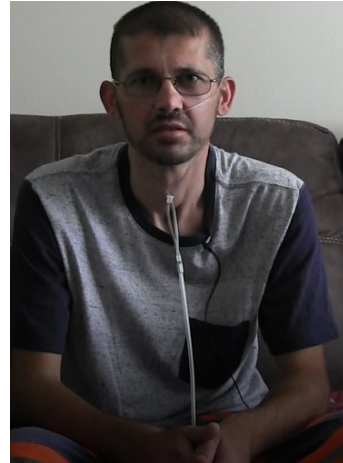
“My advice if you’re starting out, a young man working in the mines... Always be safe, work safe.”



Mackie Branham Jr.

39 years old.
18 years working underground: 5 years as a roof bolter and 13 years on the continuous miner

“I just can’t do anything no more.”



Peyton Michael Mitchell

42 years old.
Worked under ground doing a little bit of everything, including running a roof bolter

“The reason why I became a coal miner is really because that’s all there is around here.”

“I’m pretty well on oxygen 24/7 in the house.”

“I worked with what I thought was double pneumonia, till I went to the hospital and they told me that I needed to see a lung specialist. And that’s when I found out I had black lung.”

“To the miners out there that’s going underground and doing what I want to be doing, just remember, take care of yourself. Cause right now, I’ve got two nine-year olds that I can’t even play basketball with. ... You can’t do what you used to. As far as providing, you’re sitting at home, getting the checks that’s nowhere half to what you used to bring home. It’s rough.”



Anita Wolfe and Ray Anthony discussing his work history.



“If you’re going to mine, try to mine safely, make sure you’re doing what you’re supposed to do and the operators and the mines are doing what they’re supposed to do to provide you with a safe work environment.”

James Brandon Crum, DO
Radiologist in Eastern Kentucky.

Dr. Crum classifies chest x-rays as a NIOSH-certified B Reader. He worked as a 4th generation coal miner before becoming a radiologist, where he now treats many current and former coal miners with black lung.



Miners entering the NIOSH Mobile Surveillance Unit

FOR RESOURCES

COAL WORKERS’ HEALTH SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM (CWHSP)

<https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/cwhsp/>



Black lung does not have to cut a miner's life short. It can be stopped. But this will only happen when every person who works in the coal mining industry subscribes to the goal of the Coal Mine Health and Safety Act:

"The first priority and concern of all in the coal mining industry must be the health and safety of its most precious resource – the miner."

– Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969, amended 1977.



Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program Team




Mackie Branham Jr. and his family

Photo Courtesy of: Ohio Valley ReSource – Benny Becker



NIOSH Mobile Surveillance Unit



Get More Information

Find NIOSH products and get answers to workplace safety and health questions:

1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) | TTY: 1-888-232-6348

CDC/NIOSH INFO: [cdc.gov/info](https://www.cdc.gov/info) | [cdc.gov/niosh](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh)

Monthly NIOSH eNews: [cdc.gov/niosh/eNews](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/eNews)

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