



## WORKERS' SPOTLIGHT

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### BTMED TAKES AIM AT COPD, LUNG CANCER

America is dotted with Department of Energy (DOE) facilities where we built and fueled our nuclear arsenal. How often do we stop and think about the workers who toiled there over the past seven decades – exposed, often unknowingly, to hazardous substances like asbestos, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, radiation, airborne silica, and toxic solvents?

For the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed), the answer is, "every day."

In 16 years of operations, BTMed has completed nearly 28,000 screenings. The results indicate that former DOE construction workers suffer disproportionately from a variety of relatively rare medical conditions. For instance, evidence of work-related lung disease appears on the x-rays of nearly one in five BTMed participants,

mostly due to asbestos exposure. Perhaps the test result that most distinguishes these workers is the 1.4 per 100 testing positive for beryllium sensitization, a condition virtually unknown in the general population. Twenty-eight of these have been diagnosed with chronic beryllium disease.

In addition to conducting a portion of the DOE Former Worker Medical Screening Program, BTMed is also participating in one of the largest studies ever of occupational chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Chronic bronchitis and emphysema make breathing difficult for people with COPD, and the condition constitutes the fourth leading cause of death in the United

States. Construction workers are placed at an increased risk by their frequent exposure to fumes, dust, gases, and vapors. With funding from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, Duke University researchers are conducting phone interviews with both workers diagnosed with COPD and control cases drawn from the BTMed. The study will help identify the chemical agents and exposure levels that pose the greatest risk for COPD, and the information will be used to plan prevention strategies for today's workers.

Based on new data, BTMed estimates that work at DOE facilities has been responsible for approximately 20,000 cases of occupational lung cancer in construction workers. Early detection of lung cancer using CT scans with low radiation dose has recently been proven to be effective in preventing premature deaths. The effort relies on low-dose CT scans to



BTMed team meets to discuss plans for the coming year, which includes expansion of the CT scanning program

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### A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Greg Lewis

#### Importance of Rosters

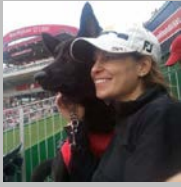
The seven different cooperative agreement holders that collectively implement the Department of Energy's (DOE) Former Worker Medical Screening Program (FWP) all work hard to reach out to

former workers to make them aware of the program and its potential benefits. Typical outreach activities include attending local retiree meetings/events, EEOICPA public meetings, and partnering with the EEOICPA administering agencies for Joint Outreach Task

Group (JOTG) events. While attending these events is important, a mass mailing is more critical to increase the likelihood of locating and informing workers of the availability of program services. To do this, the FWP cooperative

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## GETTING TO KNOW OUR STAFF



Moriah Ferullo, RPA-C, MPH currently serves as the Outreach and Communications Coordinator for the Office of Worker

Screening and Compensation Support (HS-14), within the Office of Health and Safety.

Ms. Ferullo has played a key role in promoting collaboration between the Department of Energy's (DOE) Former Worker Medical Screening Program (FWP), and the two other agencies involved with implementing the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA), the Department of Labor (DOL) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). A tangible outcome of this work was the formation of the Joint Outreach Task Group, which has conducted 36 town hall meetings in/near 22 DOE sites from 2009 to the present. Ms. Ferullo has also been instrumental in identifying and

obtaining rosters of former workers that are used by the FWP to invite workers who are eligible and interested in participating in the screening program. She serves as the HS-14 staff representative on the FWP Medical Task Group. She also handles privacy and data security issues for the FWP in collaboration with other HSS offices. Ms. Ferullo is also the program lead for the Secure Electronic Records Transfer (SERT) system, a HSS-hosted environment where DOE, DOL and NIOSH, can send and receive records and data for EEOICPA in a secure manner.

With a background as a practicing physician's assistant who also has a master of public health degree, Ms. Ferullo has brought a clinical background and a public health perspective to the administration of the programs supported by HS-14.

Prior to joining DOE in 2009, she was the Program Coordinator of the Worker Health Protection

Program, a large FWP medical screening program at 11 DOE sites that is based at Queens College in New York. In that position, Ms. Ferullo oversaw a period of rapid growth in medical screening at program sites, pioneered new outreach efforts, and worker participation in the medical screening efforts. During her tenure, she facilitated several educational workshops held during the USW Health, Safety and Environment annual conference and worked closely with staff from the United Steelworkers on developing and enhancing the health and safety training material and programs for workers from various industrial sectors within the union.

Ms. Ferullo has broad interests and is an avid runner, a passion that she will increasingly put to good use with her adorable 1 year-old daughter. ■

## BTMED *cont.*

identify lung cancer at its earliest stages, when the potential for effective treatment is greatest. In screening of 100 former Oak Ridge site workers, doctors identified 29 nodules needing additional evaluation. Two participants were diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer; follow-up scans identified two more with nodules requiring antibiotic treatment and a third diagnosed with kidney cancer. BTMed will start offering low-dose CT scanning to eligible Hanford workers in May 2013.

More information about BTMed can be found by visiting [www.btmed.org](http://www.btmed.org) or calling 1-800-866-9663. ■



**“You’ll never get a physical as good as the one you receive through the BTMed. Not even from your own personal doctor.”**

Grady Boyd, Jr., OPCMIA Local 78, Oak Ridge Y-12, K-25, and X-10



### TRIVIA QUESTION

On April 24<sup>th</sup> numerous offices at many of the DOE sites observed this occasion first organized in 1952 by the IAAP. What day will they celebrate?

**THE PANTEX FORMER WORKER MEDICAL SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM**



Conducted by the Drexel University School of Public Health

Since 2005, the Pantex Former Worker Medical Surveillance Program (PFWMSP) has provided comprehensive occupational medical screening examinations to former nuclear weapons workers from the Pantex Plant near Amarillo, Texas. This unique population of workers includes men and women with prior occupational backgrounds in the military, other Department of Energy (DOE) sites, trades unions, contractors, and professional consultants. Unique features of this facility considered when establishing the medical screening protocols were not only that workers were involved with modification, disassembly, and assembly operations, which included fabrication and testing of high explosive components, but also dismantling and 'sanitizing' surplus weapons, and providing safe storage of plutonium pits. These duties provided specific exposures allowing for medical screening for potential adverse health conditions. In addition, general wellness and current health concerns have been addressed.

The program involves collaborating partners:

- Primary: Drexel University School of Public Health in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania with Arthur L. Frank, MD, PhD as the principal investigator.
- Outreach and data management: Department of Occupational Health Sciences, The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Texas
- Clinical Services: West Texas A & M University Health Partners Clinic, Amarillo, Texas



Arthur L. Frank MD, PhD has worked as an occupational physician since the mid 1970s. He did his

post-graduate training at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York and is board certified in occupational and preventive medicine. Over the years he has been involved with many occupational health issues, but among the most important has been his work with former Pantex workers. The workers from the past, and present, have been essential in protecting this country, and it has been a great honor to help them at this time regarding the issue of workplace illnesses. Our program tries to educate each worker about general preventive health measures, such as smoking, colonoscopy, and mammography, in addition to studying work-related health issues. Working with our colleagues in both Amarillo and Tyler, Texas, we feel positive about the quality of our program and the individual attention we give to each participant. Dr. Frank says, "The importance of this program cannot be overstated in that our exams have uncovered treatable health problems including cancers. Together the members of the Pantex Former Worker Surveillance Program have played a key role in the overall commitment of the DOE programs looking after important former workers that helped keep our country safe." Dr. Frank reviews all former worker exams and provides every participant with a personal letter that includes the results and any recommendations from their screening exam.

With cooperation from Human Resources at Pantex, recruitment and program enrollment begins in the Department of Occupational Health Sciences at The University of Texas Health Science Center at Tyler, Texas. Scheduling and related activities are facilitated by Nickie Warren.

Occupation medicine physician Barbara Pinson, MD, MS, is available for consultation with practitioners and former workers regarding any aspect of their screening examination. Sara Shepherd, MAMS, is the Program

Manager who also maintains program data and prepares reports for DOE.

Once enrolled in the program, former workers are evaluated by the nurse practitioners at the West Texas A & M University Health Partners Clinic. Medical exams are performed by Dr. Phillips and Ms. Parkhurst, along with clinical support from Valerie Bergara, office manager, Brynn Mereness, RN, and Jennifer Dodson, medical assistant. Students from multiple disciplines, including sports and exercise science, undergraduate and graduate level nursing, health sciences, and medical assistant programs, are provided educational opportunities by participating in clinic activities. This is a unique opportunity for students of health care professions to learn about occupational medicine.



Angela Phillips, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, CNN, is an Assistant Professor at

West Texas A & M University where she is director of the Family Nurse Practitioner program. She has been affiliated with the Health Partners Clinic since it first opened in 2003 and with the PFWMSP since 2005. Dr. Phillips states, "The former worker program has been a pleasure to be involved in. The exams have provided invaluable experience for students. The former workers have benefited by receiving a thorough history and physical exam, as well as education regarding their medical conditions."



Amber Parkhurst, APRN, NP-BC, has been a Family Nurse Practitioner for the past 7

years. She began her nursing career working in a Coronary Care Unit. After returning to school to further her education and expand her scope of practice, she has devoted the past 3 years to caring for patients with a wide variety of medical needs at the West Texas A & M University Health Partners Clinic. She began working with PFWMSP as a student in the

# Calendar of Events



## May

- |    |                      |  |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 1  | 7:15 am              | Local Event<br>X-10 All Retiree Meeting<br>Shoney's, 8529 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN             |
|    | 9:00 am              | Local Event<br>Y-12 Inspector Group Meeting<br>Shoney's, 1100 US 321, Oak Ridge, TN                |
|    | 11:00 am             | Local Event<br>Y-12 Guards Meeting<br>Shoney's, 1100 US 321, Oak Ridge, TN                         |
|    | 4:30 pm              | FWP Event<br>X-10/Y-12 ATLC Council Meeting<br>ATLC Union Hall, 109 Viking Road, Oak Ridge, TN     |
| 2  | 9:00 am              | Local Event<br>X-10/Y-12 Asbestos Retirees Meeting<br>Shoney's, 3739 W US Highway 9, Lake City, TN |
|    | 6:00 pm              | FWP Event<br>K-25 AGRE Meeting<br>USW Union Hall, 133 Raleigh Road, Oak Ridge, TN                  |
| 7  | 8:00 am              | FWP Event<br>Mound Retiree Meeting<br>Bob Evans, 220 Byers Road, Miamisburg, OH                    |
| 9  | 11:00 am             | Local Event<br>Oak Ridge Guards Meeting<br>Shoney's, 1100 US 321, Oak Ridge, TN                    |
| 14 | 7:00 am –<br>7:00 pm | Local Event<br>Hanford Environment, Safety and Health Expo<br>TRAC Center, Pasco, WA               |
|    | 9:00 am              | Local Event<br>X-10 Plant and Equipment Meeting<br>Shoney's, 1100 US 321, Oak Ridge, TN            |
| 15 | 7:00 am –<br>7:00 pm | Local Event<br>Hanford Environment, Safety and Health Expo<br>TRAC Center, Pasco, WA               |
| 16 | 11:30 am             | FWP Event<br>Mound Retiree Luncheon<br>Golden Corral, 8870 Kingsridge Drive, Miamisburg, OH        |
| 21 | 12:00 pm             | Local Event<br>X-10/Y12 Machinists Local 480 Meeting<br>Local 480 Hall, Oak Ridge, TN              |

For a complete list of calendar events, visit:

[http://www.hss.doe.gov/healthsafety/FWSP/Formerworkermed/events\\_calendars.html](http://www.hss.doe.gov/healthsafety/FWSP/Formerworkermed/events_calendars.html)

## PANTEX FWP *cont.*

nursing program at WTAMU and is now happy to be conducting these exams as a provider. Amber says, "I feel the Pantex former worker program has helped me grow as a provider due to the complexity and in-depth examination of all aspects of the worker's career, as well as health history."

Over 800 former workers have participated in the PFWMSP with more than 200 returning for follow-up evaluations, many of these for their third visit. The services have resulted in a high level of satisfaction among participants, with 99.2% indicating a positive experience on their participation surveys. ■

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE *cont.*

agreement holders need help from the DOE Headquarters to obtain comprehensive worker rosters from DOE sites.

Four years ago, we obtained rosters from almost all DOE sites. This year, we refocused our efforts to get an updated additional list of workers from each DOE site. So far, we have obtained new rosters from the Argonne National Lab and the Fermi National Accelerator Lab, and received updated rosters with additional worker names from the Oak Ridge National Lab, the Y-12 National Security Complex, the former K-25 facility, the Paducah and Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plants, the Mound site, the Fernald site, and the Brookhaven National Lab.

We want to thank those sites that have assisted us with this initiative. These worker rosters are a vital part of the FWP, and we will continue to work to make sure that they are as up to date as possible. ■

### CONTACT US:

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Fax:  
(202) 586-8548

**Trivia Answer:** No, it's not Earth Day; we celebrated that on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. It is Administrative Professional Day and we would like to thank the many Administrative Professionals who contribute to the success of the EEOICPA and FWP programs every day.