

WHEN A COAL MINER DIES....



THE NATIONAL COAL WORKERS'
AUTOPSY STUDY

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL
SAFETY AND HEALTH

When a Coal Miner Dies

- his family may arrange for an autopsy
- it costs them nothing
- the results may help his widow get "black lung" benefits

THE NATIONAL COAL WORKERS' AUTOPSY STUDY . . .

The Study is a service program for survivors of coal miners and is authorized by the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. It is conducted with the cooperation of the United Mine Workers of America and the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA) of the U.S. Department of Interior.

The Study helps scientists and medical doctors learn more about coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP), also called "black lung" disease. The data from the Study are sent to the Appalachian Laboratory for Occupational Safety and Health (ALOSH), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health where they are studied by qualified medical experts. When a miner's dependents agree to participate in the program they are helping ALOSH in its efforts in early detection and prevention of coal workers' pneumoconiosis.

WHAT IS AN AUTOPSY?

An autopsy is a detailed examination of the internal organs, including the heart and lungs. Thus, if coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP), or "black lung" disease, is present, it may be determined by an autopsy even if it was not proven during life.

An autopsy need not interfere with funeral arrangements.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- **former underground miners**
- **former surface workers at underground mines**
- **workers who were either active or retired at time of death**

It does not matter how long the miner worked in the mines, and he need not have died in a hospital. However, the miner must have had some experience in or at an underground coal mine.

ARRANGING FOR AN AUTOPSY . . .

The family physician, the hospital, the funeral director, or local public health officials can help to arrange for an autopsy. It will be performed by a pathologist — a doctor specially trained to make such examinations.

ALOSH has told almost all pathologists about the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study, and most of them are participating in this voluntary program. If there is no pathologist in your area, or if local pathologists are not participating in the study, arrangements can be made for proper transportation to a cooperating pathologist to have the autopsy performed. The miner's family may be reimbursed for the cost of transportation.

GIVING CONSENT . . .

In order to have an autopsy performed, the miner's widow or next-of-kin gives permission by signing two short forms.

One is the pathologist's consent form; it gives him permission to make the examination.

The other is the consent and questionnaire form for the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study. In order to complete this form, a member of the miner's family will be asked nine simple questions about the working and smoking history of the deceased.

THE COST . . .

If an autopsy is requested and a Consent, Release, and History Form is completed, there is no cost to the miner's widow or family.

The pathologist who performs the autopsy is paid in full, directly by the Appalachian Laboratory for Occupational Safety and Health (ALOSH).

Fees for transportation for the purpose of having an autopsy performed under the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study can be refunded. Refund should be requested when a "black lung" claim is filed. Under some circumstances costs for an exhumation for the purpose of establishing a "black lung" claim also may be refunded. **CHECK WITH THE OFFICE WHERE THE "BLACK LUNG" CLAIM IS BEING PROCESSED BEFORE SEEKING AN EXHUMATION.**

THE RESULTS . . .

After the autopsy, the pathologist can, on request, send results to the miner's doctor, who should explain them to the family.

The pathologist will send the results, along with the questionnaire and several small samples of lung tissue, to ALOSH in Morgantown, West Virginia. Upon receipt of the material, ALOSH will pay the pathologist for performing the autopsy.

The pathologist can send the autopsy results to any organization specified, or an autopsy report may be obtained later from ALOSH *only* if the widow or next-of-kin gives written permission.

NIOSH...

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare conducts the health program of the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. NIOSH's research program places special emphasis upon early diagnosis and prevention of coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP), or "black lung" disease.

NIOSH also establishes federal coal mine health regulations, conducts the x-ray examination program required by the 1969 Act, and tests and approves respirators for use in coal mines.

The Appalachian Laboratory for Occupational Safety and Health (ALOSH), which runs the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study, is the heart of NIOSH's intensive coal mine health research program.

Coal mine safety regulations are established by the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA), U.S. Department of the Interior, which also enforces all federal coal mine health and safety regulations.

"Black lung" benefits are established by the Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969. All claims are filed at local Social Security Offices and are processed by the Social Security Administration or the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Consent, Release, and History Form, which is part of the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study, is *not* a "black lung" claim. "Black lung" claims should *never* be sent to ALOSH.

MORE INFORMATION . . .

For more information about the National Coal Workers' Autopsy Study write

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