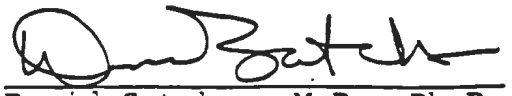
REPORT TO CONGRESS

TRANSFER OF BUREAU OF MINES HEALTH AND SAFETY RESEARCH PROGRAMS TO THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



David Satcher, M.D., Ph.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Senate Report 104-368 requested that the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) submit a report "detailing the completion of the transfer, the management structure, the number of FTE's, the current research portfolio, and future research plans prior to the fiscal year 1998 budget hearing." The following is submitted in response to this request.

The Transfer of U.S. Bureau of Mines Health and Safety Research to NIOSH

The Department of Energy's (DOE) fiscal year (FY) 1996 (Pub.L. 104-134) stated that:

> ...the managers understand that the fiscal year 1997 budget will reflect the transfer of health and safety research programs of the Bureau of Mines to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the Department of Health and Human Services. The managers encouraged such a transfer in the fiscal year 1996 conference agreement on H.R. 1977 and see no reason to delay the transfer. The managers strongly encourage the Department of Energy to enter into an interagency agreement with NIOSH for the fiscal year 1996 funding. In determining the allocation of funds for the transferred functions, the managers expect DOE and NIOSH to consider the concerns of all interested parties, including industry and labor. The managers also expect the agencies to recognize the importance of maintaining a health and safety research presence in the West.

To carry out Congress' intent as expressed in Pub.L. 104-134, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Director of NIOSH and the Assistant Secretary, Fossil Energy, DOE, entered into a Memorandum of Agreement on June 20, 1996, assigning day-to-day management of these mine health and safety research programs to NIOSH for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 1996.

The permanent transfer was made in December 1996 to ease the transition of employees and to simplify the reporting of wages for tax purposes; transition of health benefits, leave records, and other administrative record keeping.

Management Structure

NIOSH has created a position of Associate Director for Mining in the NIOSH Office of the Director and has appointed an Acting Associate Director for Mining. The Associate Director for Mining reports to the Director of NIOSH. The Associate Director oversees and manages mine safety and health research within NIOSH

and is responsible for interaction with key mining safety and health stakeholders from industry, labor, and other government agencies. NIOSH has established a search committee and expects soon to initiate a nationwide search for a permanent Associate Director for Mining.

Based on an extensive review of the current program; the statistics related to mining safety and health; and the projected trends within the mining industry, an organizational structure has been developed for mining safety and health research in NIOSH. The Office for Mine Safety and Health Research has the lead responsibility for the review of the extant mine health and safety research program, the development of the appropriate organizational structure for this program within NIOSH, and the development of the long-term vision and direction for mining health and safety research. The organizational structures for Pittsburgh and Spokane are designed to parallel other NIOSH research divisions. All employees who were employed in the mine, health and safety program at the former Bureau of Mines will continue working in one of the research or administrative divisions described below. A total of 413 FTEs were transferred to NIOSH on October 11, 1996--336 are in Pittsburgh; 77 in Spokane.

The Pittsburgh laboratory will: (1) carry out surveillance of fatal and nonfatal traumatic injuries, occupational diseases, health and safety hazards, and the use of control technology and protective equipment for prevention of injury and disease in mining; (2) conduct research on the measurement, monitoring, and control of dust and other toxic substances to which miners may be exposed; (3) conduct laboratory and field research to evaluate and control hearing loss and occupational noise exposure in mining; (4) conduct field investigations and laboratory studies on mining injuries and ways to prevent them; (5) conduct laboratory and field investigations to understand better the causes of catastrophic events that lead to fatalities, such as fires, explosions, and structural or ground failures; (6) develop sensors, predictive models, and engineering controls to reduce miners' risk for injury or death; and (7) translate into usable effective interventions, research findings, new control technology concepts, and newly identified approaches to health and safety problems affecting miners.

The Pittsburgh laboratory will conduct research within the following branches: Dust and Toxic Substance Control Branch; Hearing Loss Prevention Branch; Mining Injury Prevention Branch; and Disaster Prevention and Response Branch. In addition, the laboratory will include two crosscutting activities: (1) Surveillance, Statistics and Research Support Activity and (2) Extramural Coordination and Information Dissemination Activity. Administrative support will be provided through a Branch of the NIOSH Office of Administrative and Management

Services.

The Spokane laboratory is structured to provide leadership in the prevention of work-related illness, injury, and death in the Western extractive industries by addressing high-priority health and safety hazards identified by customers, stakeholders, and researchers through the careful review and assessment of accident statistics. Primary functions include efforts to identify and characterize health and safety problems through surveillance; evaluation of existing control technologies; development, testing, and demonstration of alternative control technologies; and timely dissemination of information and education to industry, labor, academia, and other government agencies. Partnerships in Spokane and Pittsburgh with mine employers, employee representatives, trade associations, and other governmental agencies will play an important role in the achievement of these efforts.

The Spokane laboratory will consist of two research branches: the Catastrophic Failure Detection and Prevention Branch, and the Mining Injury and Disease Prevention Branch. In addition, there will be two crosscutting activities: (1) the Extramural Coordination and Information Dissemination Activity and (2) the Mining Surveillance and Statistics Support Activity. A branch of the NIOSH Office of Administrative and Management Services will provide administrative support to the Center.

The Current Research Portfolio

Plans in FY 1997 reflect the importance of continuing the health and safety research previously initiated while addressing new or higher priority needs. Current program resources are directed toward the following areas:

Health	
Dust and Toxic Substances	10 percent
Hearing Loss	4 percent
Safety	
Injury Prevention	37 percent
Disaster Prevention and Response	49 percent

In addition, the following activities support the overall research program:

- Surveillance
- Technology Transfer and Technical Assistance
- Extramural Research Support

The following is a synopsis of the program changes for FY 1997:

1. The level of effort in the health-related areas is slightly increased compared to Bureau of Mines research in FY 1996. Specifically, there is increased focus on the reduction of exposure to respirable coal dust and silica dust; measurement of respirable dust exposure; protection of workers from excessive noise exposure; and control/mitigation of chemical hazards in active metal and nonmetal mines. This increase in effort is due to the following:

   - Cases of coal worker pneumoconiosis and silicosis are still occurring at an alarming rate; about 10 percent of underground coal miners are still overexposed to coal mine dust, based on the current standard.

   - A recent analysis by NIOSH of two large audiological databases suggests that there has been little change in the risk of miners' developing hearing loss--as many as 90 percent of 50-year-old miners suffer significant hearing loss.

   - Key stakeholders in industry, labor, and government agencies agree to the importance of work in these areas.

2. Increasingly, efforts in health-related areas will be supported by reducing the level of research addressing fires, explosives, ground control, and computer-assisted mining. These changes respond to the following trends:

   - Both production and productivity increased over the last decade with no increase in fatalities in the U.S. coal mining industry.

   - Disasters due to explosions and fires have declined dramatically.

   It is clear, however, that NIOSH needs to have sufficient expertise in ground control and disasters such as fires and explosions to continue to provide technical assistance to improve prevention of these low probability but high impact events. NIOSH is committed to maintaining appropriate capabilities in these areas.

3. The level of effort in health and safety surveillance activities was increased threefold, leading to improved quantitative health and safety data. Enhanced surveillance and statistical studies will be beneficial in establishing research priorities, setting prevention targets, tracking trends, and assessing the impact of interventions.

4. The mine safety and health research program is being coordinated with the National Occupational Research Agenda plans and recommendations.

5. Increased attention to extramural coordination and communication will improve the application to mining and other sectors of critical information gleaned during mine safety and health research.

Future Research Plans

Based on analyses of injury, disease, and exposure data, as well as stakeholder input, it is clear that there is a need to expand efforts in the areas of dust control and measurement and hearing loss prevention, including improved noise control methods applicable to mining.

Excessive noise exposure is a persistent and growing problem. The past level of effort has not matched the level of risk of disabling injury from noise exposure. Research in this area will be expanded based on the availability of fiscal and personnel resources.

As noted earlier in this report, many injuries and fatalities in mining could be prevented through the application of current knowledge. To understand better and overcome the barriers to application of critical knowledge, human behavioral science research will continue to be a program focus. In addition, improved methods of training will be developed and evaluated. Increased attention will also be given to evaluate the impact of workplace interventions.

Prior health and safety research at the Bureau of Mines directed a significant share of available resources to underground coal mining. Based on a review of sector trends, surveillance data, and input from stakeholders, the program is being redirected to more equitably address the critical health and safety issues in surface mines and non-coal mining operations.

New and emerging mining practices and technologies will be evaluated for potential injury and health risk. It is best to identify and deter these threats before they become large-scale workplace health and safety problems. The ability to prevent problems versus reacting to them once they have occurred is of primary concern to NIOSH and consistent with CDC's role as the Nation's prevention agency.

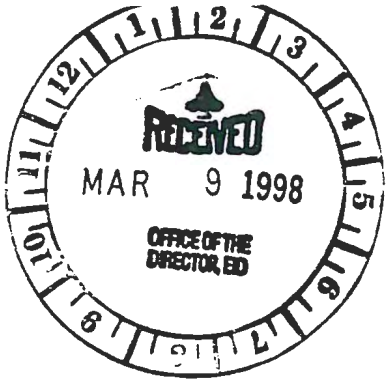
The following 13 priority areas for research identified by the National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) are directly applicable to the Mining Health and Safety Research Program and will help guide resource allocation in the future:

NORA Category	Priority Research Area
Disease and Injury	Allergic and Irritant Dermatitis Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Hearing Loss Low-Back Disorders Musculoskeletal Disorders of the Upper Extremities Traumatic Injuries
Work Environment and Work Force	Emerging Technologies Organization of Work
Research Tools and Approaches	Control Technology and Personal Protective Equipment Exposure Assessment Methods Risk Assessment Methods Surveillance Research Methods

Summary

The transition of the Mine Health and Safety Research Program from the former Bureau of Mines to CDC's NIOSH has been completed, management structures have been established, and information systems are being developed and improved to ensure the conduct of a safety and health research program responsive to the highest priority needs across the entire mining sector. The focus continues to be placed on "solution-oriented science," with attention to understanding and contributing to the elimination of technological and other barriers to the prevention of injuries, fatalities, and diseases from mining work. Communicating results of scientific research to all stakeholders who are in a position to contribute to a safer and healthier mine environment is of paramount importance.

Coordination with external partners also continues to be a NIOSH priority. Their active involvement will ensure the development and conduct of a program based on sound science and one that is fully responsive **to ensure a safe and healthful workplace for all American miners,** the mandate of this research program.



Date: March 4, 1998

To: Lead Team Members

From: Kathy Sykes

The Department of HHS transmitted three NIOSH reports to Congress that were requested in Senate Reports 104-368 and 105-58. Theses reports are entitled:

> Certificate of Personal Protective Equipment and Clothing for Firefighters and Emergency Personnel - 104-368, page 61
>
> Transfer of Bureau of Mines Health and Safety Research Programs to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health - 104-368, page 65.
>
> Health Effects of Diesel Fumes on Workers in Underground Mines 105-58-, page 63.

I did not include the appendices to the report on health effects of diesel exhaust because of its length (108 pages). Please contact my secretary, Linda Purvin if you need a copy.

Thanks

Kathy Sykes

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C. 20201

FEB 23 1998

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Health Effects of Diesel Fumes on Workers in Underground Mines - 105-58, page 63

Sincerely,

John J. Callahan
Assistant Secretary for
Management and Budget

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Office of the Secretary

Washington, D.C. 20201

FEB 23 1998

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services and Education
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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