



## **Worker Health Protection Program (WHPP)**

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### **US Preventive Services Task Force Recommends the Life Saving Benefits of Early Lung Cancer Screening Offered to Former Department of Energy (DOE) Nuclear Weapons Workers**

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) made an historic announcement this month, recommending the use of low-dose CT scan for the early detection of lung cancer in high-risk smokers - the same type of screening that has been available as early as 2000 to high-risk former workers from the K-25, Portsmouth and Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plants, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Y-12 National Security Complex, Mound Plant, Fernald, Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the Nevada Test Site DOE facilities.

The USPSTF is a government-appointed task force made up of independent medical and public health experts on preventive services. Their recommendation builds upon findings released by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in 2011 that confirmed the use of low-dose CT scans can prevent at least 20% of deaths from lung cancer in high-risk individuals. This recommendation is the first time the USPTF has endorsed any type of lung cancer screening and will likely influence standard medical practice and insurance coverage for members of the public who meet age and smoking criteria.

Since 2000, over 12,000 former nuclear weapons workers nationwide have received free CT scan-based lung cancer screening through the Worker Health Protection Program (WHPP), a medical screening program funded by the Department of Energy (DOE) and sponsored by the United Steelworkers in association with Queens College of the City University of New York and the Atomic Trades and Labor Council. To date, the program has found 96 lung cancers, with the majority (75%) at an early stage, when treatment is most effective. In the general population, in the absence of screening, only 15% of lung cancers are presently detected in early stages.

WHPP director Steven Markowitz, M.D. stated, "The recommendation of the USPSTF endorses the lung cancer screening method that we have been offering to high-risk DOE workers since

2000. Their actions will broaden the availability of lung cancer screening and have the potential to dramatically reduce lung cancer deaths.”

Approximately 160,000 people in the United States die each year of lung cancer and nearly 90% of those who get lung cancer die from it, generally because it is discovered too late. With early lung cancer detection through low-dose CT scan, the USPTF believes this number will be reduced significantly. “This test is especially important for high-risk DOE and other workers who have had combined exposure to occupational carcinogens and cigarette smoke,” Dr. Markowitz added.

The USPTF recommendation states that stopping smoking remains the most important way to prevent lung cancer.

Former K-25, Portsmouth, Paducah, ORNL, Y-12, Mound, Fernald, INL and NTS DOE workers who meet specific age, smoking, health and occupational criteria may be eligible for the free screening and should call 1-866-228-7226 or visit [www.worker-health.org](http://www.worker-health.org) for more information about participating in the WHPP medical screening program.

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*The Worker Health Protection Program (WHPP) is a medical screening program and is a joint venture between the United Steelworkers Union (USW), the Atomic Trades and Labor Council (ATLC) and Queens College of the City University of New York and is operated with funds from the Department of Energy under grants DC-FC01-06EH06018 and DE-FC00-06EH06008.*