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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program (CWHSP)
1000 Frederick Lane – M/S LB208
Morgantown, WV 26508-5402

June 2, 2021

NORTHWESTERN MEDICINE
ATT: ROBERT COHEN
675 N ST. CLAIR, SUITE 18-250
CHICAGO, IL 60611

FACILITY NUMBER: 11043

Dear Doctor:

We are writing to provide you with an update on National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program (CWHSP) recommendations about spirometry as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate your patience and flexibility during these difficult and uncertain times.

In June 2020, NIOSH recommended that spirometry continue to be deferred due to concerns about possible SARS-CoV-2 transmission related to spirometry testing of individuals with active infection. At that time, the American Thoracic Society and the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine suggested that the risk to those conducting pulmonary function tests that were not immediately needed for patient care likely outweighed the benefit of performing the tests. Because using spirometry for routine worker screening does not rise to that level of immediate need, it was deferred.

Since then, many clinics have incorporated recommended infection prevention and control (IPC) measures to mitigate SARS-CoV-2 transmission and protect their staff and clients. Additionally, safe COVID-19 vaccines, effective at preventing infection and illness, particularly severe illness, among those vaccinated, have received Emergency Use Authorization from the US Food and Drug Administration and everyone 12 years and older is now eligible to get vaccinated. SARS-CoV-2 transmission in these clinics will be further minimized if staff and clients are vaccinated.

Given these advancements, NIOSH recommends that spirometry testing as part of the CWHSP can resume if recommended IPC precautions and guidance from state and local health departments are followed and information about community transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is considered. We encourage you to review detailed guidance on this web page <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/cwhsp/makeroutine.html> to determine if spirometry testing as part of the CWHSP can resume at your facility. We will continue to update guidance on this website as conditions evolve.

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Please note that Respiratory Assessment Forms and the Miner Identification Form should be submitted for miners participating in any portion of the CWHSP.

If you have any questions about this information, the examination program, or require assistance, please contact me by phone at 304-285-5835 or email BAansell@cdc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian R. Ansell".

Brian R. Ansell
Spirometry Project Officer
Coal Workers' Health Surveillance Program
Surveillance Branch
Respiratory Health Division