

Digging Our Own Graves: Coal Miners And The Struggle Over Black Lung Disease

Barbara Ellen Smith

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Coal worker's pneumoconiosis—known as black lung disease or simply black lung—results from long-term exposure to coal dust. The small particles build up in the lungs over time, since the body can't expel them, leading to inflammation, fibrosis (the buildup of excess connective tissue), and in the worst-case scenario, necrosis (cellular death). Black lung is similar to other forms of lung disease caused by exposure to silica dust. To support miners and families when the coal company can't be identified or is no longer in business, in 1977 Congress set up the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, which has so far shelled out \$45 billion in compensation to miners and their families. We deserve bold solutions to the struggles we face. We deserve—and can have—good, safe jobs and a fair return on our work. Miners struggling to breathe due to black lung disease didn't let rain, humidity or walking long distances stop them and their families from meeting with legislators, telling their stories, and demanding that Congress act to protect black lung benefits. Three buses carrying over a hundred miners and their loved ones are on their way home from Washington D.C. They met with elected leaders and asked them to keep their promise to support the Black Lung Disability Trust Fund, which helps to cover much-needed medical expenses for those suffering from black lung. Digging Our Own Graves book. Read reviews from world's largest community for readers. Digging Our Own Graves by Barbara Ellen Smith. Other editions. Want to Read saving… Error rating book. Refresh and try again. Rate this book. Clear rating. 1 of 5 stars 2 of 5 stars 3 of 5 stars 4 of 5 stars 5 of 5 stars. Open Preview. See a Problem?