

professional perspective conflicts with the notion that spontaneous involvement on the part of non-professional workers is more meaningful. The suggestion here is that the element of the professional approach that links immediate actions with long-term goals might be included in any orientation of senior friends. Such action could be taken without raising the issues of professional detachment or noninvolvement that might dampen

the willingness of the workers to make emotional investments in their clients.

The overall assessment of the senior friends program, then, is that not only did it attain its major objectives to the extent that they could be measured, but it illuminated some areas of difficulty and concern. These are points that can be taken into account in planning a much-needed continuation of the services.

Notes and Brief Reports

Impact of Black Lung Benefits on Public Assistance*

The Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act of 1969 established a program providing monthly payments—"black lung" benefits—to coal miners "totally disabled due to pneumoconiosis arising out of employment in . . . coal mines" and to widows of coal miners who died of the disease. Payments are made from the general funds of the U.S. Treasury—not the social security trust funds—though the program is administered by the Social Security Administration.¹ Benefit levels are based on the number of dependents. The amounts range from \$161.50 monthly for a miner or widow without dependents to \$322.90 for a miner or widow with three or more dependents. From January 1970, when claims were first filed under the program, to the end of December 1971, benefits were awarded to 88,000 miners and 71,000 widows.

One area of interest in the black lung program is the extent to which the program has affected the Federal-State public assistance programs by providing income maintenance independent of what is furnished by those programs. The results of a study of the relationship of the black lung program and the assistance programs in five States are reported here. Though the study was limited to data for miners and widows aged 65 and over, it does provide some insight into the

effect of entitlement to black lung benefits on receipt of public assistance payments.

STUDY METHOD

Information was obtained for a 10-percent sample of black lung beneficiaries whose benefits were currently being paid at the end of November 1971 and who were residing in Illinois, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. These five States—the Nation's leading coal-mining States—account for approximately 80 percent of the national total of black lung benefit awards. Of the 11,540 beneficiaries in the 10-percent sample, 8,240 were aged 65 and older in November 1971.

Public assistance data were secured through the use of Medicare (health insurance for the aged) records. State assistance agencies may arrange with the Social Security Administration to obtain coverage under the supplementary medical insurance segment of Medicare, on a "buy in" basis, both for their money-payment recipients aged 65 and over and for persons eligible only for medical care payments under Medicaid—the medical assistance program authorized by title XIX of the Social Security Act. The five States included in the study have such arrangements, but this report excludes data for persons receiving Medicaid only.² Medicare's "third-party master record" maintains data on the previous and current buy-in status of assistance recipients. The tape file developed for this study represents an

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¹ For a fuller description of the program, see the *Social Security Bulletin*, October 1971, pages 11-21, and August 1972, page 2

² Most assistance recipients aged 65 and over are on the old-age assistance rolls, but some receive aid to the blind. A small number may be counted as recipients of aid to the permanently and totally disabled because their payments have not been redesignated as old-age assistance on their attainment of age 65.

TABLE 1.—Black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over with benefits in current-payment status in November 1971: Number and proportion receiving cash public assistance payments at time of entitlement to black lung benefits, 5 States

[Based on 10-percent sample]

Beneficiaries	Total	Illinois	Kentucky	Pennsylvania	Virginia	West Virginia
All black lung beneficiaries.....	8,240	811	590	4,863	371	1,615
Miners.....	4,664	447	350	2,637	213	1,017
Widows.....	3,576	364	230	2,226	158	598
Beneficiaries entitled to public assistance payments.....	262	12	73	110	8	59
Miners.....	98	2	28	37	3	28
Widows.....	164	10	45	73	5	31
Percent entitled to public assistance payments.....	3.2	1.5	12.6	2.3	2.2	3.7
Miners.....	2.1	.4	8.0	1.4	1.4	2.8
Widows.....	4.6	2.7	19.6	3.3	3.2	5.2

extract of selected items from the black lung benefit record and from the third-party master record.

BLACK LUNG BENEFICIARIES ON ASSISTANCE ROLLS

Of the 8,240 black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over in the sample, 262 or 3.2 percent were receiving assistance payments under old-age assistance or aid to the blind when they became entitled to black lung benefits. The beneficiary

was defined for the purposes of the study as a public assistance recipient at the time of entitlement to benefits under the black lung program if (a) there was a record of State buy-in, (b) the buy-in stop date was either the month of entitlement or a subsequent month, or (c) there was no stop date indicated. (The buy-in stop date could not precede May 1970, the month in which checks for black lung benefits were first mailed to beneficiaries.)

Almost half (110) of these recipient-beneficiaries were living in Pennsylvania; Illinois ac-

TABLE 2—Black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over with benefits in current-payment status in November 1971 and number receiving public assistance payments at time of entitlement to black lung benefits. Percentage distribution by age and selected status

[Based on 10-percent sample]

State	Number	Percentage distribution, by age						
		Total	65-69	70-71	72-74	75-79	80-84	85 and over
Black lung beneficiaries								
Total ¹	8,240	100.0	31.0	12.3	16.0	23.1	12.1	5.5
Miners.....	4,664	100.0	32.1	12.2	16.3	21.7	11.9	5.8
Widows.....	3,576	100.0	29.4	12.3	15.7	25.0	12.4	5.2
Kentucky.....	590	100.0	34.3	12.9	17.1	18.5	12.4	4.8
Miners.....	350	100.0	37.7	11.1	15.4	16.9	14.0	4.9
Widows.....	230	100.0	29.1	15.6	19.6	20.9	10.0	4.8
Pennsylvania.....	4,863	100.0	29.6	11.8	15.0	24.6	13.2	5.8
Miners.....	2,637	100.0	31.2	11.9	15.5	22.9	12.8	5.8
Widows.....	2,226	100.0	27.7	11.7	14.5	26.6	13.7	5.8
West Virginia.....	1,615	100.0	35.8	13.0	17.0	20.0	9.7	4.5
Miners.....	1,017	100.0	34.8	12.7	16.8	20.5	10.2	5.0
Widows.....	598	100.0	37.6	13.6	17.2	19.2	8.7	3.7
Beneficiaries entitled to public assistance								
Total ¹	262	100.0	27.1	14.1	14.5	19.5	14.9	9.9
Miners.....	98	100.0	41.8	14.3	10.2	14.3	9.2	10.2
Widows.....	164	100.0	18.3	14.0	17.1	22.6	18.3	9.7
Kentucky.....	73	100.0	28.8	16.4	13.7	19.2	12.3	9.6
Miners.....	28	100.0	46.4	10.7	3.6	14.3	14.3	10.7
Widows.....	45	100.0	17.8	20.0	20.0	22.2	11.1	8.9
Pennsylvania.....	110	100.0	29.1	10.9	12.7	19.1	20.0	8.2
Miners.....	37	100.0	43.3	13.5	10.8	10.8	8.1	13.5
Widows.....	73	100.0	21.9	9.6	13.7	23.3	26.0	5.5
West Virginia.....	59	100.0	23.7	16.9	18.7	16.9	11.9	11.9
Miners.....	28	100.0	35.7	17.9	17.9	14.3	7.1	7.1
Widows.....	31	100.0	12.9	16.1	19.4	19.4	16.1	16.1

¹ Total includes data for Illinois and Virginia, which are excluded from breakdowns for miners and widows

TABLE 3.—Black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over with benefits in current-payment status in November 1971 and number receiving public assistance payments at time of entitlement to black lung benefits: Percentage distribution by number of dependents and selected States

[Based on 10-percent sample]

State	Number	Percentage distribution				
		Total	Miner or widow with—			
			No dependent	1 dependent	2 dependents	3 or more dependents
Black lung beneficiaries						
Total ¹	8,240	100 0	62.5	34.5	2 1	0 9
Miners.....	4,664	100 0	38 5	58 5	3.4	1.6
Widows.....	3,576	100 0	96 4	3 2	.3	.1
Kentucky.....	590	100 0	50 3	41.9	5 2	2 6
Miners.....	350	100 0	21 7	66 0	8 0	4.3
Widows.....	230	100 0	93 9	5 2	.9	
Pennsylvania.....	4,863	100 0	69 7	28.9	1 1	.3
Miners.....	2,637	100 0	46 6	51 1	1.8	.5
Widows.....	2,226	100.0	97.2	2 6	2	
West Virginia.....	1,615	100 0	49 2	44 2	4.2	2.4
Miners.....	1,017	100 0	22 7	67 2	6.4	3 7
Widows.....	598	100 0	94.3	5.0	.5	.2
Beneficiaries entitled to public assistance						
Total ¹	262	100 0	74.8	20 2	2.7	2 3
Miners.....	96	100 0	40.8	47.0	6 1	6.1
Widows.....	164	100 0	95.1	4 3	.6	
Kentucky.....	73	100 0	68 5	26 1	2.7	2.7
Miners.....	28	100 0	28 6	57.2	7.1	7.1
Widows.....	45	100 0	93 3	6 7		
Pennsylvania.....	110	100 0	82 7	16 4		.9
Miners.....	37	100 0	56 8	40 5		2.7
Widows.....	73	100 0	95 9	4.1		
West Virginia.....	59	100 0	66 1	22 0	6 8	5 1
Miners.....	28	100 0	28 6	46 4	14 3	10.7
Widows.....	31	100 0	100 0			

¹ Total includes Illinois and Virginia, which are excluded from breakdowns for miners and widows.

counted for 12, and 8 were Virginia residents (table 1). In the five mining States considered together, 2.1 percent of the miner beneficiaries were receiving assistance payments, compared with 4.6 percent of the widows. In each of the States, miners were less likely than the widows to be on the assistance rolls.

The five States varied widely with respect to the proportion of recipient-beneficiaries. In Illinois, only 1.5 percent of all black lung beneficiaries and less than 1 percent of those who were miners received assistance payments. At the other extreme, 12.6 percent of Kentucky's black lung beneficiaries were on the assistance rolls and 19.6 percent of the State's widow beneficiaries. In both Pennsylvania and Virginia, the proportion receiving assistance payments was slightly more than 2 percent, but the total number of black lung beneficiaries was much larger in Pennsylvania. West Virginia's recipient-beneficiaries were 3.7 percent of the State's black lung beneficiaries.

The data available do not permit a determination that the proportion of black lung beneficiaries who are receiving assistance payments is higher or lower than might be expected, given their socioeconomic characteristics. The number of old-age assistance recipients as a percentage of all persons aged 65 and over is given below

State	Percent of black lung beneficiaries receiving public assistance	Percent of population aged 65 and over receiving OAA
Illinois.....	1 5	3 1
Kentucky.....	12 6	17 1
Pennsylvania.....	2 3	3 9
Virginia.....	2 2	3 6
West Virginia.....	3 7	6 0

for these States, together with the proportion of black lung beneficiaries in the State who were receiving assistance at the time of their entitlement.

In each of these States, the proportion of recipient-beneficiaries is lower than the ratio of all

TABLE 4.—Black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over with benefits in current-payment status in November 1971 and number receiving public assistance payments at time of entitlement to black lung benefits: Percentage distribution by social security benefit status and selected States

[Based on 10-percent sample]

State	Number	Percentage distribution					
		Total	OASDI beneficiaries				Nonbeneficiaries of OASDI
			Total	Retired workers	Widows or widowers	Others	
Black lung beneficiaries							
Total ¹	8,240	100 0	92 1	59 0	32 4	0 7	7 9
Miners.....	4,664	100 0	94 2	93 9	1	.2	5 8
Widows.....	3,576	100 0	89 3	13 4	74 6	1 3	10 7
Kentucky.....	580	100 0	93 8	59 8	33 6	4	6 2
Miners.....	350	100 0	95 1	94 8	-----	.3	4 9
Widows.....	230	100 0	91 7	6 5	84 8	4	8 3
Pennsylvania.....	4,863	100 0	91.1	57 8	32 4	.9	8 9
Miners.....	2,637	100 0	93 4	93 2	-----	.2	6 6
Widows.....	2,226	100 0	88 4	15 9	70 7	1 8	11 6
West Virginia.....	1,615	100 0	92 9	62 1	30 7	1	7 1
Miners.....	1,017	100 0	94 8	94 6	.1	.1	5 2
Widows.....	598	100 0	89 8	6 8	82 8	2	10 2
Beneficiaries entitled to public assistance							
Total ¹	262	100 0	92 7	36 6	55 7	.4	7 3
Miners.....	98	100 0	86 7	85 7	-----	1 0	13 3
Widows.....	164	100 0	96 3	7 3	89 0	-----	3 7
Kentucky.....	73	100 0	94 5	39 7	54 8	-----	5 5
Miners.....	28	100 0	92 9	92 9	-----	-----	7 1
Widows.....	45	100 0	95 6	6 7	88 9	-----	4 4
Pennsylvania.....	110	100 0	90 0	31 8	57 3	.9	10 0
Miners.....	37	100 0	81 1	78 4	-----	2.7	18 9
Widows.....	73	100 0	94 5	8 2	86 3	-----	5 5
West Virginia.....	59	100 0	94 9	45 8	49 1	-----	5 1
Miners.....	28	100 0	89 3	89 3	-----	-----	10 7
Widows.....	31	100 0	100 0	6 5	93 5	-----	-----

¹ Total includes Illinois and Virginia, which are excluded from breakdowns for miners and widows.

old-age assistance recipients to the total aged population. The fact that entitlement to black lung benefits is based on some record of continuous employment may be an important factor here.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS

Selected characteristics of those who were receiving assistance payments at the time of their entitlement to black lung benefits are presented

TABLE 5.—Black lung beneficiaries aged 65 and over who were receiving public assistance at time of entitlement to black lung benefits: Number and percentage distribution by monthly amount of social security benefits¹ and number of dependents

[Based on 10-percent sample]

Type of benefit and number of dependents	Number			Percentage distribution						
	Total	Not receiving OASDI	Receiving OASDI	Monthly amount of OASDI benefit						
				Total	Under \$50	\$50-74	\$75-99	\$100-124	\$125-149	\$150 or more
Beneficiaries entitled to public assistance.....	262	19	243	100 0	1 7	39 1	36 6	15 6	3 7	3 3
Miners.....	98	13	85	100 0	2 3	24 7	34 1	27 1	7 1	4 7
Miners only.....	40	7	33	100 0	3 0	42 4	27 3	24 3	3 0	-----
With 1 dependent.....	46	6	40	100 0	-----	17 5	37 5	30 0	10 0	5 0
With 2 or more dependents.....	12	-----	12	100 0	8 3	-----	41 7	25 0	8 3	16 7
Widows.....	164	6	158	100 0	1 3	46 8	38 0	9 5	1 9	2 5
Widows only.....	156	6	150	100 0	1 3	49 4	39 3	8 0	7	1 3
With 1 or more dependents.....	8	-----	8	100 0	-----	-----	12 5	37 5	25 0	25.0

¹ Amount of social security benefits, if any, in current-payment status at time of entitlement to black lung benefits

in tables 2-5: Age, number of dependents, OASDI beneficiary status, and the amount of their OASDI monthly benefit, if any. Except for the data on benefit amounts in table 5, comparable figures for the complete sample of black lung beneficiaries are included. Data for Illinois and Virginia by type of beneficiary (miners and widows) are not shown separately, because the number of recipient-beneficiaries in these States is small, but the State data are included in the table totals.

Age distribution.—The data show some differences in age distribution for all black lung beneficiaries and for the subgroup receiving public assistance. The differences are not substantial, however. Thirty-one percent of all black lung beneficiaries in the sample and 27 percent of the recipient-beneficiaries were in the group aged 65-69 (table 2). About 18 percent of the total group were aged 80 or over, compared with 25 percent of those on the assistance rolls. Slightly more than 28 percent of each of the groups fell in the aged 70-74 bracket.

Among all black lung beneficiaries, the age distribution of miners and widows differed little. Widows who were on the assistance rolls at the time of entitlement were somewhat older, however, than the miners who were getting assistance payments. For the total group, the proportion of miners aged 65-69 was 32 percent and 29 percent of the widows were in that age bracket. Among those who were assistance recipients, the proportions aged 65-69 were 42 percent and 18 percent for miners and widows, respectively.

Number of dependents.—Ninety-five percent of the widows who were receiving public assistance when they became entitled to black lung benefits had no dependents (table 3). Only 41 percent of the miners on the assistance rolls were without dependents. Forty-seven percent of these miners had one dependent—presumably a spouse. For all black lung beneficiaries in the sample, the comparable proportions were substantially the same.

Receipt of social security benefit.—Of the 262 persons in the sample who were receiving public assistance, 93 percent were also getting a monthly OASDI benefit (table 4). A somewhat smaller proportion (87 percent) of the miner recipient-beneficiaries had OASDI benefits in current-payment status. For all miner black lung beneficiaries, the proportion with such benefits was

94 percent. Among widows, on the other hand, those on the assistance rolls at time of entitlement to black lung benefits were somewhat more likely to have an OASDI benefit than those in the total black lung beneficiary group: 96 percent of the widow recipient-beneficiaries but only 89 percent of all widow black lung beneficiaries had a social security benefit.

Although the percentage of assistance recipients with social security benefits was high, the amount of the monthly benefit itself was relatively low (table 5). Three-fourths of those with OASDI benefits received less than \$100 a month; only 7 percent received as much as \$125 or more. The proportion getting benefits of \$100 or more was 39 percent for miners but only 14 percent for widows. Among the miners without dependents, 27 percent had benefits amounting to \$100 or more. (A somewhat larger proportion of miners (13 percent) than widows (4 percent) were not receiving a social security benefit at all.)

SAVINGS IN ASSISTANCE PAYMENTS

Because the level of black lung benefits is higher than the amount at which an individual or family could retain eligibility for public assistance payments, it can be assumed that the black lung beneficiaries on the assistance rolls would have their assistance payments discontinued. On the basis of this assumption, it is possible to estimate the savings in old-age assistance payments that are produced by the black lung program.

At the end of September 1971, average monthly old-age assistance payments in the five States in the study were as follows:

<i>State</i>	<i>Monthly amount</i>
Illinois -----	\$60.76
Kentucky -----	58 87
Pennsylvania -----	95 94
Virginia -----	68 44
West Virginia -----	79.57

If the average assistance payment being received by the black lung beneficiaries in each of these States were equal to the average shown above, an estimated \$2.5 million in old-age assistance payments would be saved annually. Nationally, annual savings would amount to nearly \$3.2 million.