



# Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

P.O Box 6753

Huntington, WV 25773-6753

Fax 304-522-4079

Ph. 304-522-0246

[www.ohvec.org](http://www.ohvec.org)

## **Self-Reported Cancer Rates in Two Rural Areas of West Virginia with and Without Mountaintop Coal Mining**

### **What did the study involve?**

- Community based, participatory research
- Door-to-door interviews conducted by trained college student volunteers collected complete data from 769 adults
- Persons living in a community affected by mountaintop mining on Coal River in Raleigh and Boone Counties, West Virginia (409)
- Persons living in a non-mining community in Pocahontas County, WV (360)

### **What information was collected from the participants?**

- Size of the immediate family, including deceased members
- How long the person had lived at the location
- Family history of cancer
- Whether the subject had ever been a coal miner
- Whether a doctor or nurse had ever diagnosed the person as having cancer
- What type of cancer they have/had
- Age and place of residence when diagnosed
- History of smoking or smokeless tobacco use
- The person's gender

### **What were the conclusions?**

- Reported cancer rates were higher in the mining community (14.4% of adults in the mining community vs 9.4% in the non-mining community)
- The cancer rate was higher in ways not explainable by age, sex, smoking, occupational exposure, or family history of cancer
- No one type of cancer was responsible for the effect
- Former coal miners in the study did not have a higher rate of cancer than those who had not been miners, but lived in the community

- In 2007, a National Cancer Institute study stated that approximately 3.9% of U.S. citizens are cancer survivors, making the rate in both West Virginia communities well above the national average