

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 4, 2022

Jeannette J. Galanis
Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
201 12th St. S
Suite 401
Arlington, VA 22202-5450

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Galanis:

Thank you for your work to provide safety protections and health services to our miners in Virginia and nationwide. As the Biden administration continues to ramp up efforts to get more Americans vaccinated, we are writing to request that the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) expand its newly launched Miner Vaccine Outreach Program into Southwest Virginia mining communities.

On January 25, 2022, the Department of Labor announced MSHA's Miner Vaccine Outreach Program to deliver free COVID-19 vaccinations and provide educational outreach to mining communities. In selecting Kentucky and Arizona, MSHA notes the "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that vaccination rates are below 60 percent in two states where a substantial number of mining operations exist."

Mining communities in Virginia are seeing similar challenges increasing COVID-19 vaccination rates. Virginia's counties vary widely in terms of vaccinations rates, and mining communities in Southwest Virginia are quite similar to the neighboring counties in Kentucky that the Miner Vaccine Outreach Program is serving. In Virginia, mining communities are centered in Dickenson, Buchanan, Wise, Tazewell, Lee, and Russell counties, where the adult population has a fully-vaccinated rate of less than 57%.¹ It is clear that these communities are in critical need of targeted outreach to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates.

¹ <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/see-the-numbers/covid-19-in-virginia/covid-19-vaccine-summary/>

Miners have been essential workers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and MSHA's Miner Vaccine Outreach Program is one critical way to support their health and safety. We urge you to expand this program into Southwest Virginia so that coal miners there receive the medical services and support they need and deserve. Thank you for the consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator