



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
GEOLOGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DMME to Hold Seminar on “Addiction in the Workplace”

Big Stone Gap, VA – A free seminar addressing substance abuse in the workplace, specifically in the mining industry, will be held at 8 a.m. on Friday, May 29, 2009, at Mountain Empire Community College’s Goodloe Center, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) announced today. The half-day seminar is co-sponsored by DMME, the Cumberland Mountain Community Services Board, Frontier Health (PD1), and Dickenson County Behavioral Health.

The seminar has been designed to increase understanding of addiction, drug screenings and treatment options and processes; provide information on various substances, including prescription medications, and how to recognize signs of impairment and the specific risks of substance abuse for miners; and address current treatment, drug screening, and supervision protocols for miners who have lost their certifications.

According to DMME Division of Mines Chief, Frank Linkous, identifying and confronting miners who are struggling with substance abuse and addiction issues are the essential first steps in efforts to control this serious safety problem in Virginia’s coal mines. “Working together, we are committed to assuring that miners will choose not to abuse controlled substances and illegal drugs that impair their abilities to work safely in Virginia’s coal mines,” said Linkous. With resources provided by the Virginia Attorney General’s settlement with Perdue Pharma, makers of OxyContin, DMME is offering assistance for suspended coal miners to help with treatment options. DMME is also partnering with providers of community services to help mining communities better understand the causes of addiction and to apply these resources to address this problem.

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The seminar is recommended for mine operators and management, substance abuse treatment providers, community members, and providers of medical and prescription services. Seminar speakers will include Dr. Mary McMasters, University of Virginia; Dr. Tonya Buchanan, University of Appalachia School of Pharmacy; Eric Green, LPC, CSAC, Frontier Health; and Tommie Harding, RN, CCM, COHC, Wellmont Lonesome Pine Hospital. Cheryl Robinette with Cumberland Mountain Community Services will facilitate a panel discussion.

A second seminar will be held in the Richlands, VA area at a date and location to be announced.

Registration for the free seminar will be held from 8 to 8:30 a.m. and a continental breakfast will be available. For additional information, please contact Tina Neal at (276) 523-8281.

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