BTMED news

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Meet Leighanne Varilla, BTMed's Re-Screen Coordinator

If you've had a re-screen from BTMed, you may have already talked to her on the phone. Leighanne Varilla has been with BTMed for 11 years and coordinates the re-screen exams that workers are eligible for every three years after joining the program. She answers a few questions about her work here:

What is your favorite part of the job?

Talking to BTMed's participants, helping them get their exams, and making them feel like we are here to help.

Why should workers get re-screen exams?

To determine if there are any changes in their health from the last time they received an exam. Sometimes important health issues won't show up for years.

If it's been three years since a participant's last BTMed exam, what should they do?

Call 1-800-866-9663, extension 2, and I can help schedule an appointment for the participant.

HAS IT BEEN THREE YEARS SINCE YOUR LAST BTMED SCREENING?

If your last BTMed screening was before September 2014, call 1-800-866-9663 ext. 2 today to schedule your free re-screen exam!

"It means a lot to have this screening. Anybody that doesn't take advantage of BTMed is really missing out."

-Michael Finn, IBEW Local 575

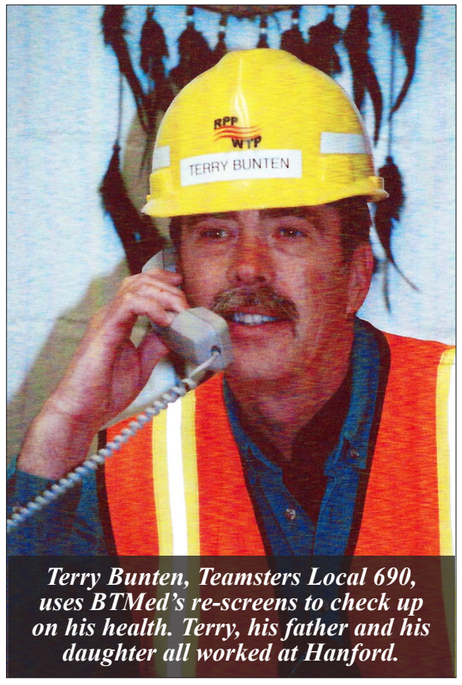
Former Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant worker

BTMed Participant

After 28 years at Hanford, worker gets "fresh set of eyes" to keep track of health

Terry Bunten figures it can take up to 40 minutes to drive from one end of the Department of Energy's Hanford site to the other. As a teamster, he spent much of his career transporting workers and supplies around the 580 square-mile site. But on the arid, rocky plateau where some of the first materials for the atomic bomb were produced, sometimes Terry found himself hauling extremely dangerous cargo.

From housing the world's first large-scale plutonium reactor, to developing a cleanup plan that may require dozens of years and billions of dollars, Hanford's story stretches far into the past and will stretch far into the future. While to some Hanford may represent a pinnacle of scientific progress, Terry and his coworkers believe they have been put at risk of serious illnesses from doing this dangerous work. Fortunately, the Building Trades National Medical Screening Program (BTMed) is looking out for workers like him by offering free medical screenings.



Terry Bunten, Teamsters Local 690, uses BTMed's re-screens to check up on his health. Terry, his father and his daughter all worked at Hanford.

Terry first set foot on the site in 1977 to join his father, also a teamster, at the site's 300 Area. As a teamster at Hanford, Terry was constantly moving around. With Hanford's mission being as large as its sprawl, there was always work to support. Terry drove flatbed trucks, dump trucks, and water trucks; hauling debris and equipment, and taking radioactive waste to the 200W burial ground. Hanford's 200 Area is home to the "Tank Farms", where a series of underground steel tanks hold a generation's worth of contaminated waste. Millions of gallons of nuclear and chemical waste are still stored in this area.

"It seemed like all this was just part of the job," Terry said, thinking back to this part of his life at Hanford. "If I wanted to remain employed, then that's what I did."

Along with hauling some of the most dangerous material in North America, Terry also transported a pump used to agitate the tank farm waste, worked in warehousing and on vehicles in the automotive department, and worked around the N reactor, the last reactor built at Hanford and the last to be shut down. Terry was at the site both during and after the reactor's production period, which ended in 1987. "When it was running, the N Reactor was kind of seen as a sister reactor to Chernobyl," he said. "And of course we all know what happened there."

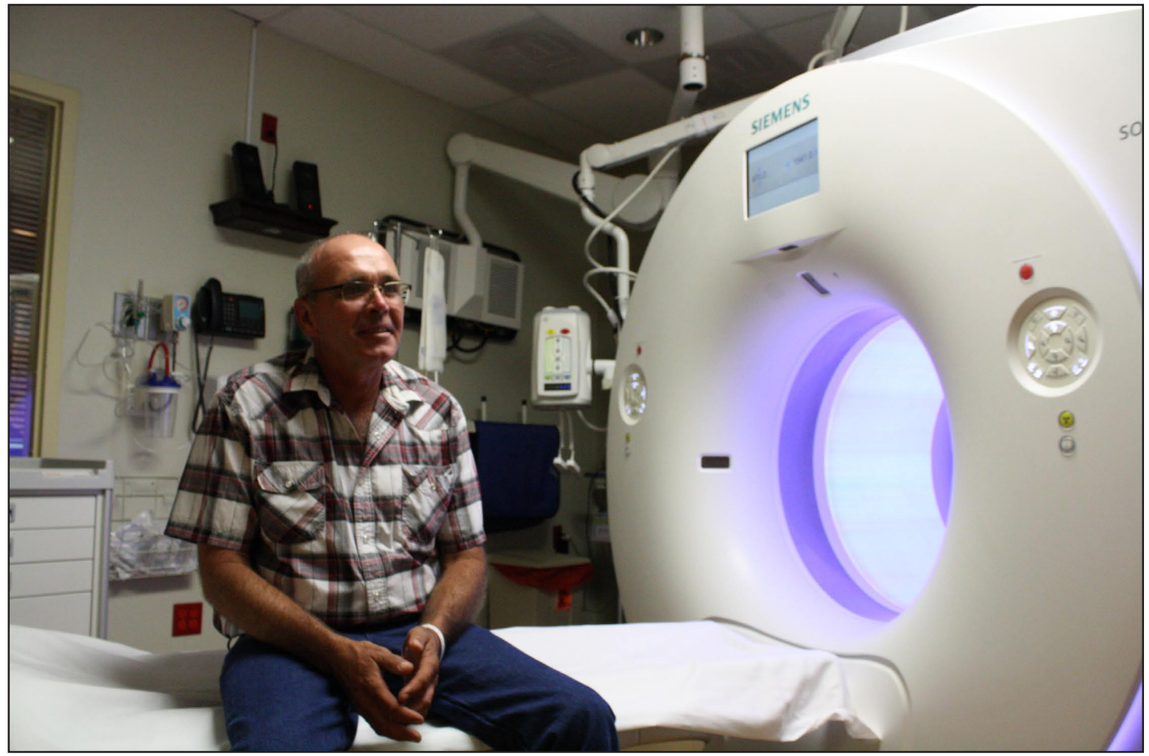
After 28 years of working on the site, Terry believes he was exposed to a long list of hazards and contaminants. That's why, for DOE construction workers, participating in BTMed is so important.

Terry plans to continue monitoring his health with the information BTMed has given him. The doctors who work with BTMed are specifically looking for diseases that might come up from exposure to toxins on DOE sites, and each worker that goes through BTMed takes a work history interview to help get a clearer picture of what they may have been exposed to.

This intimate knowledge of DOE sites is key to how BTMed helps construction workers. Other doctors, for example, might not know much about beryllium, or radiation, or the dozens of other hazards that construction workers faced. "It's good to have another opinion, a fresh set of eyes, in case your regular doctor might not see something," Terry cautioned.

Re-screen exams are available every three years, in order to look for illnesses that might not show up in the first exam. Terry has already taken advantage of the re-screen. "Hats off to the program," he said about BTMed. "Very thorough and passionate. Thank you for being there."

CT Scans Begin in Portsmouth, OH and Paducah, KY



Former workers who are at especially high risk for lung cancer may be eligible for BTMed's Early Lung Cancer Detection Program. CT Scans are offered in Augusta (GA), Cincinnati (OH), Oak Ridge (TN), Richland (WA), Seattle (WA), and have just been added in Paducah (KY) and Portsmouth (OH). In order to protect BTMed participants from unnecessary radiation in the CT Scan procedure, only those who are at most risk for lung cancer are invited to participate.

Please call 1-888-464-0009 to learn if you are eligible for a CT Scan.

(Above): Joseph Goble, former Portsmouth worker, waits for his CT Scan.

(Below): BTMed outreach staff Ron Bush (Boilermakers Local 105) and BTMed nurse Janet Shorter, RN visit the lung cancer clinic at Southern Ohio Medical Center.

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A CT SCAN?

- **Age 50-79**
- **Smoked 20 years or more on an average of a pack a day (20 pack-years)**

OR

- **Chest X-ray findings show asbestosis**

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1. Visit www.btmed.org
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3. Follow the instructions
4. You're enrolled!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL 1-800-866-9663 OR VISIT WWW.BTMED.ORG