Worker Attitudes toward Genetic Testing for Beryllium Sensitivity

Genetic Susceptibility Testing for Beryllium: Worker Knowledge, Beliefs, and Attitudes

Key Findings

- Some workers wanted to take the test voluntarily and know the results, so they could be more in control of their choices. They wanted to be able to tell their adult children before they were employed at a trade/facility with beryllium exposure.
- Workers were fearful that the government/employer would find out the results of the tests, so they wanted to ensure that the testing entity would have financial and political independence from the employer.
- Workers were skeptical that employers would comply with a new genetic testing law prohibiting them from collecting or using genetic information.
- Worker education programs should address: the difference between an inherited trait vs. damage to genetic material, the social consequences of voluntarily disclosing your test result, and that a negative test doesn’t mean risk-free.

Conclusions:
- A window of opportunity exists to create regional partnerships – labor, management, public health scientists, primary care professionals and others – for translational research, beginning with testing former workers.