



# Work-Related Cancer

*Employers and employees in manufacturing need your help*

## NORA

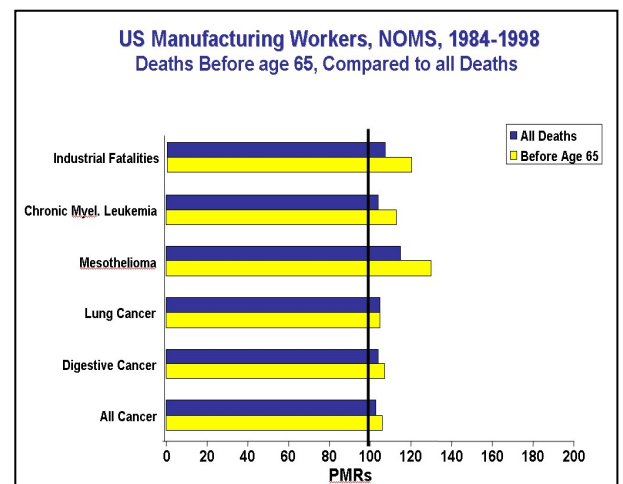
The National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) is a partnership program to stimulate innovative research and improve workplace practices. Unveiled in 1996, NORA has become a framework for guiding Occupational Safety and Health research in the nation. Diverse parties collaborate to identify the most critical issues in the workplace. Partners then work together to develop goals, objectives, and an implementation plan for addressing these issues.

## Manufacturing

The Manufacturing Sector consists of industries that have been assigned a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) number between 31 and 33 ([www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm#N31](http://www.census.gov/epcd/naics02/naicod02.htm#N31)), as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. This sector represents one of the largest workforces and includes a diverse group of manufacturing industries such as Beverage and Tobacco, Food, Wood Products, Primary Metals, Fabricated Metal Products, Transportation Equipment, Furniture, and Chemical Manufacturers.

## Cancer in the Manufacturing Sector

Past estimates indicate that about 4% of cancer deaths in the U.S. are caused by occupational exposures; currently this is thought to underestimate the true burden of occupational cancer.<sup>1</sup> Many of the studies that reported on the health effects of carcinogens were conducted in manufacturing. These assessments have resulted in the monitoring of and reduction in workplace exposures to carcinogens worldwide, in some cases through the development of protective standards. Exposures to carcinogens in the workplace may not result in cancer until 15-40 years later. Prevention of exposure to newly identified carcinogens is critical in order to achieve reductions in workplace attributable cancer. Based on the National Occupational Mortality Surveillance System (NOMS) ([www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/surveillance/NOMS/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/surveillance/NOMS/)), U.S. manufacturing workers have increased proportionate mortality to cancer before age 65. To reduce cancer in workers, preventive strategies should be used in manufacturing processes where known and potential carcinogens are used.



NIOSH is the federal agency responsible for conducting research and making recommendations to prevent work-related injury, illness, and death. Its mission is to generate new occupational safety and health knowledge and to transfer that knowledge into practice.

## Strategic Goal: Reduce the Incidence and Prevalence of Cancer due to Exposures in the Manufacturing Sector

The NORA Manufacturing Sector Council has developed goals to enhance the state of knowledge related to reducing the incidence and prevalence of cancer due to exposures in the manufacturing sector. These goals can be found on the NORA Web site ([www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora)) under the Strategic Goal 6 of the National Manufacturing Agenda. Public comments on this document are accepted at any time.

### How You Can Help

#### *Apply research findings:*

- Use the results of surveillance and research studies to identify and track workplace hazards that have been linked to cancer
- Develop and distribute worker and employer education materials about the use of engineering controls to reduce worksite exposure to carcinogens
- Develop business cases for adopting interventions
- Conduct and promote exposure assessment and hazard evaluations of known and suspected carcinogens

#### *Educate employers and employees:*

- Educate companies and workers about known and suspected hazards for work-related cancer by distributing information about existing workplace hazards linked to cancer
- Publicize effective engineering control measures for carcinogens

#### *Develop and adopt interventions:*

- Adopt interventions shown to be effective to prevent workers from developing work-related cancer
- Improve partnerships with state and local health departments and agencies to improve and promote data sharing for research and interventions

The NORA Manufacturing Sector Council includes individuals from industry, academia, labor, and government. The Council meets face-to-face twice a year. Additional communication occurs through email, conference calls, and web-based meetings. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) facilitates the work of the Council. The Council's Work-Related Cancer workgroup relies on Corresponding Members for additional expert input and feedback on the goals. Members and Corresponding Members primarily meet via conference calls and web-based meetings.

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#### **For more information about NORA or the NORA Manufacturing Sector, please visit:**

NORA Website: [www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nora)

NIOSH Manufacturing Program Portfolio:  
[www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/manuf/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/programs/manuf/)

#### **Reference**

- (1) Straif K [2008]. The burden of occupational cancer. *Occup Environ Med* 65 (12): 787-788.