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Australian radiologists to be trained to world standard for black lung detection

A world leading black lung medical expert is training Australian radiologists to a new global standard in Brisbane this week, to help in the fight against deadly black lung disease.

Dr Robert Cohen from the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences School of Public Health, of Illinois US along with representatives of National Institution of Occupational Health and Safety are training Australian health professionals to a new standard set by the International Labour Organisation for reviewing and screening of x-rays of coal mine workers.

The B-reader course runs all week with 20 health professionals attending from all over Australia. It is part of a Queensland Government initiative in conjunction with the University of Illinois, Chicago, to help Queensland coal miners and families.

The CFMEU has campaigned to improve early detection for the devastating disease.

“This program will help save lives,” CFMEU Mining’s Queensland District President Stephen Smyth, said.

“Early detection is critical. If it is picked up at the early stages of the disease, a coal miner can still lead a normal life.

“But by the time they are diagnosed with severe levels of the disease, there are fewer options, and a reduced life expectancy.

“Now that Australian radiologists and other health professionals will be trained to world’s best practice, it will increase and improve screening, and increase awareness about the disease.

“This program also represents an important acknowledgement that the training is needed, as some in the medical profession previously believed it was unnecessary.”

The training is a recommendation of the Queensland Parliamentary inquiry into black lung and is funded by the Queensland Government.

Dr Cohen and his colleagues will also attend a conference for black lung victims next week in Mackay.

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