

ATOMIC HEALTH NEWS

FOR DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, ATOMIC WEAPONS EMPLOYEES & URANIUM WORKERS



FEATURED CONTENT

Advocacy Efforts to Expand Health
Care Access for Former Workers

.....

Uranium Mines & Mills contribution to
our Nation's Nuclear Weapons Complex

.....

Learn More About Neuropathy
& Chronic Kidney Disease

DEAR VALUED READER,

.....

April marks 13 years of Nuclear Care Partners. With every passing year, I am filled with a deeper sense of gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of this mission-driven work. I do not take this responsibility to serve our patients lightly, and consider it a privilege to hear each of your stories and provide you with the highest standard of care. I am also incredibly grateful to our dedicated team who show up day-in and day-out to do the rewarding work with a heart for service.

Since NCP's founding, we have been committed to providing the highest level of clinical care, creating opportunities for meaningful connection for former DOE workers, and providing critical education and advocacy to you.



I hope you'll see that 13 years later, we are still committed to these driving principles, which are reflected in the content of our Spring 2024 edition of Atomic Health News.

As you read, I hope you engage in our efforts to begin hosting reunions so you're able to connect and stay in touch with the friends and colleagues you worked alongside for so many years. Don't miss an update on our advocacy efforts at the nation's capital to expand health care access for former atomic workers. I also hope you find the educational content we provide around Chronic Kidney Disease and neuropathy helpful and resource-rich.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you for the past 13 years.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jenna'.

Jenna Noem

Co-Founder and CEO
Nuclear Care Partners

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ASK THE EXPERTS: NEUROPATHY

Symptoms, Diagnosis, and How We Can Help



What is Neuropathy?

Neuropathy is defined as damage to nerve cells that are outside of the brain and spinal cord. There are several causes and types but today we are going to look at the most common causes, symptoms, and treatments as it pertains to the EEOICPA. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), more than 20 million people suffer from one form of Peripheral Neuropathy.

The symptoms listed below are just a few examples of neuropathy that may affect your quality of life. Some of the most notable symptoms we see associated with DOL patients are indicated with an asterisk*.

- Muscle weakness and cramps*
- Muscle twitching
- Loss of muscle and bone
- Changes in skin, hair, or nails
- Numbness*
- Loss of sensation or feeling in body parts*
- Loss of balance or other functions as a side effect of the loss of feeling in the legs, arms, or other body parts*
- Emotional disturbances
- Sleep disruptions*

Toxic Exposures:

Often, we see most neuropathies associated with former atomic workers are related to specific job titles that involved being in close proximity to heavy metals such as mercury, lead, and cadmium.

48 Cd Cadmium 112.41	80 Hg Mercury 200.59	82 Pb Lead 207.2
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Medication Induced:

We also see that certain medications that are used to treat cancers and tumors can have very harsh side effects, that which impact the nerves in the peripheral parts of the body. This can include the hands, feet, arms and legs. While the vast majority of the time these symptoms start in the most distal parts of the body, it has been noted that over time symptoms can move closer to central parts of the body.



We have helped many former atomic workers add Neuropathy to their white card and help manage their symptoms at home.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms and want to inquire about adding neuropathy to your white card, we would love to connect!

How Is Neuropathy Diagnosed?

A neuropathy diagnosis can be made through a series of evaluations, assessments, and testing provided by a physician. Ultimately, a doctor will decide what course of action and tests best suit your particular needs. Here are some examples how neuropathy can be evaluated and tested:

SENSATION TESTING

Your doctor may ask you to remove your socks and shoes and close your eyes while they perform sensation testing using a sharp and dull object to see if you can feel when they are touched. In extreme cases, you may not be able to feel either or one and not the other.

NERVE CONDUCTION STUDY

This test involves placing small metal wires on the skin and inducing a small electrical shock to measure the speed and strength of responsiveness from your nerves.

NEEDLE ELECTROMYOGRAPHY (EMG)

EMG is the technique of recording and analyzing the electrical signals derived from individual muscle fibers of motor units while at rest and during voluntary contraction.

NEEDLE OR PUNCH BIOPSY

A healthcare provider will use a small, sometimes 3mm, punch to take a sample of tissue to evaluate for what is called small fiber neuropathies. This is often used when other tests are inconclusive.

Although neuropathy in most cases cannot be reversed, it can be managed with treatments and lifestyle modifications.



ATOMIC SITE FEATURE

How uranium mines and mills across the country contributed to our nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Uranium was a fundamental element when it came to building and maintaining our nation's nuclear weapons complexes. From mills to mines, read more about the contributions of the Grants Uranium Mining District in New Mexico and the Uravan Mineral Belt in Colorado.

Grants Uranium Mining District, New Mexico

From the 1950s through the late 1990s, the Grants Uranium Mining District was the primary location of uranium extraction and production activities in New Mexico. Several mines make up the Grants mining belt which spans along the southern margin of the San Juan Basin in Cibola, McKinley, Sandoval, and Bernalillo Counties. Second to Wyoming, New Mexico has the highest uranium reserves in the United States. Today, the New Mexico Mining Museum in Grants helps preserve the history, significance, and legacy of the atomic heroes who worked in the mines.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), several mines in this area are under the jurisdiction of the New Mexico Environment Department, New Mexico Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department, and EPA. The EPA is working with state, local, and federal partners to assess and address health risks and environmental effects of the mines.



Uranium Mineral Belt, Colorado

Although uranium can be found in much of Colorado, the Uranium Mineral Belt located in several western Colorado Counties, including Mesa, Montrose and San Miguel, accounted for roughly 77 percent of the total uranium production in the state.

The Uranium Mineral Belt mines produced almost 14 million tons of ore averaging 0.24 percent triuranium octoxide (U₃O₈) and over 356 million pounds of vanadium oxide.

While Colorado was a significant uranium producer, all mines and mills were shut down by 2005, with the last running mill operating in Montrose County. However, to this day, uranium reserves are abundant in Colorado and there are several companies that continue to explore and maintain uranium mining permits within the state.

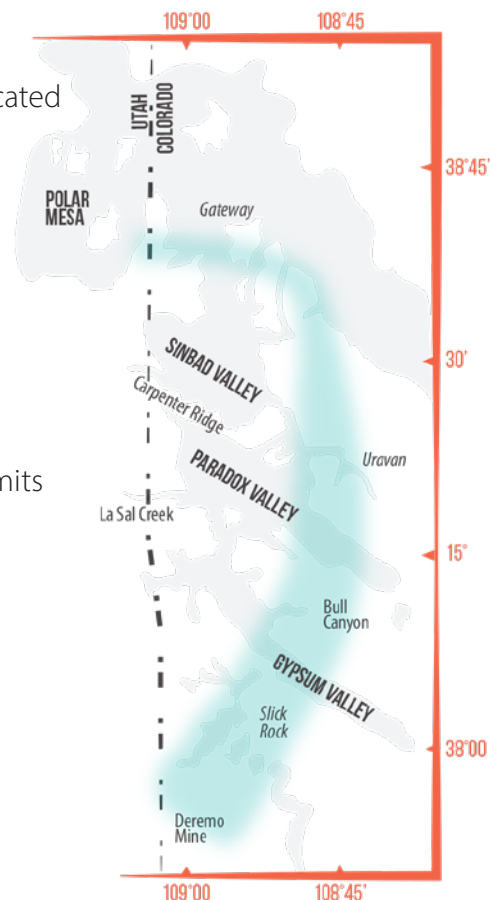
About RECA

The Radiation Exposure Compensation Act (RECA) is a federal statute that provides monetary compensation for Atomic Veterans, who contracted cancer and a number of other specified diseases as a direct result of their exposure to atmospheric nuclear testing. This was typically undertaken during the Cold War, where exposure to high levels of radon while mining uranium was common.

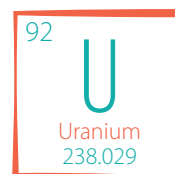
RECA Compensation is determined by three factors:

- Impairment
- Survivorship
- Wage Loss*

**Determined by the number of years an employee was unable to work or experienced reduction in earnings as a result of their work-related illnesses.*



URANIUM FACTS



- Pure uranium is a silvery-white metal.
- Uranium is named after the planet Uranus.
- The atomic number of uranium is 92, meaning uranium atoms have 92 protons and usually 92 electrons. The isotope of uranium depends on how many neutrons it has.
- Uranium occurs naturally in low concentrations in soil, rock and water.
- For many years, uranium was used primarily as a colorant for ceramic glazes and for tinting in early photography.
- Out of 50 present and former uranium milling sites in 12 states, 24 have been abandoned and are the responsibility of the US Department of Energy.
- The United States was the world's leading producer of uranium from 1953 until 1980.

ADVOCACY EFFORTS

to Expand Health Care Access for Former DOE Workers

by Jenna Noem

.....

Thirteen years ago I helped found Nuclear Care Partners because I felt a deep calling to provide the highest clinical standard of care to the dedicated men and women who served our country's nuclear weapons complexes. From mining materials and clerical work to scientific breakthroughs around nuclear technology, over 600,000 men and women supported our nation's nuclear weapons development throughout the Cold War— ultimately, putting their health on the line for the freedoms we all enjoy today.

When I began my work, I knew it would entail a great deal of patient advocacy to ensure our mission of delivering the highest quality care was realized. However, I couldn't have fathomed that advocacy would also translate into steadfast lobbying efforts at our nation's capital to ensure that EEOICPA patients receive the care they need. It's for this very reason, I strongly support the Health Care for Energy Workers Act of 2024 (S.3700) recently introduced by Senators Hickenlooper of Colorado, Blackburn of Tennessee and Murray of Washington. If passed, this legislation would improve care for EEOICPA patients by allowing nurse practitioners (NP) and physician assistants (PA) to order care.

I truly believe when EEOICPA was passed, our lawmakers wanted to ensure our former atomic workers received the highest standard of care. However, today these patients can face long delays to see a physician because of the physician shortage we face across the country. This shortage is further magnified in rural and remote locations where clinics and healthcare access sites are often staffed with top-notch nurse practitioners and physician assistants. Yet, under current Department of Labor rules, they are not allowed to order care for EEOICPA patients. More often than not, the lack of an NP or PA with the approved ability to order care or treatment for a claimant means a delay in access to critical health care services. This is in contrast to the VA system, where NPs and PAs have become a critical partner in healthcare delivery.

At Nuclear Care Partners we believe in elevating the standard of care for this program and providing exceptional care without compromise. By allowing nurse practitioners and physician's assistants to order care, our patients' opportunities to receive in-home care in a way they need and deserve is improved greatly, even in the most remote areas.

“ Our nuclear energy workers deserve access to quality and timely healthcare, regardless of where they live. This legislation improves healthcare for energy workers by permitting nurse practitioners and physician assistants, not just doctors, to fulfill their needs. In doing so, we help ensure that energy workers in nuclear weapons facilities, including those at Y-12 National Security Complex in Tennessee, can continue their important work without having to worry whether they will have access to care when they need it – even if they live in a rural area. ”
- Senator Marsha Blackburn, Tennessee



This is not a problem unique to Nuclear Care Partners' patients. This Department of Labor policy impacts all home health organizations who are providing care to former atomic workers. For several years now, we have been advocating for a change in the policy. We have been sharing stories about remote areas where we have found an exceptional PAs or NPs to do heartfelt, meaningful work skillfully serving these men and women, but have been hampered by the current Department of Labor policy.

I am very grateful to Senators Hickenlooper, Blackburn, and Murray for introducing this legislation to aid the dedicated men and women who are now suffering grave consequences from their service to this country.

While we are celebrating the introduction of this important legislation in the U.S. Senate, we still need to get a similar bill introduced in the House of Representatives. After which, we will also need Congress to pass this important legislation.

I encourage everyone in the EEOICPA health care community to write a letter of support asking their U.S. Senators to vote in favor of the Health Care for Energy Workers Act of 2024. Please also reach out to your elected congressional representative and ask them to consider sponsoring a similar bill to S.3700 within the house to allow nurse practitioners (NP) and physician assistants (PA) to order care.

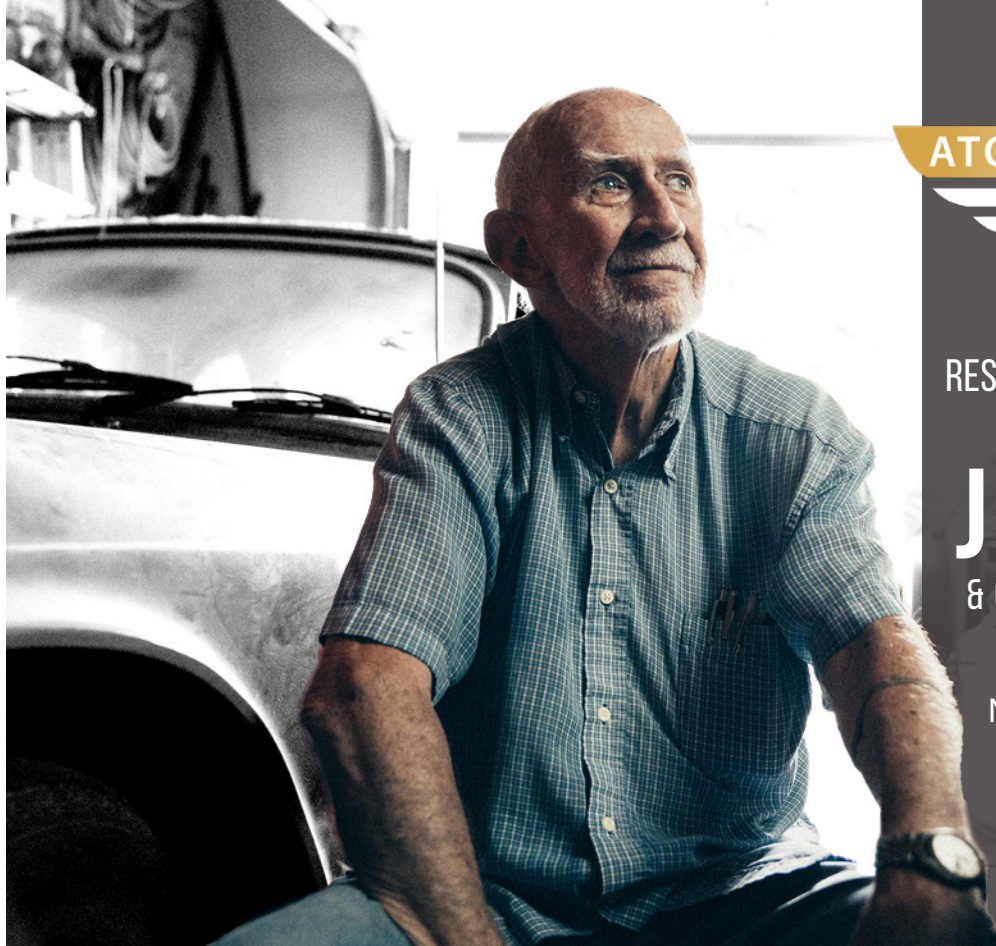
This minor policy adjustment will result in monumental results as we strive to provide the highest quality of care to you, our nation's atomic heroes.

Yours in advocacy,

Jenna Noem

Co-Founder and CEO





RESOURCES • EDUCATION • CONNECTION

JOIN TODAY
& CLAIM YOUR FREE WELCOME GIFT!

.....
NuclearCarePartners.com/AHA

RESOURCES

.....

In the last 15 months, more than 2,000 new EEOICPA claims have been submitted from former workers across the country. We know that filing with the DOL can often be a daunting and confusing task leaving claimants stuck or lost in the process. That's why we created the **Atomic Heroes Alliance** — to support as many former workers through the filing process as possible.

Our team can provide education on what to expect from the filing process as well as connect former workers to resources to assist them.

We are committed to helping you maximize benefits covered with your DOL white card including:

- ☑ Durable Medical Equipment
- ☑ In-home Health Care
- ☑ Medical Treatments
- ☑ Medical Expense Reimbursements
- ☑ And More! **Such as How To Get Home Modifications covered on page 10.**

FILING PROCESS EDUCATION

We can help you understand what you need to file a claim starting with the appropriate medical records.

CONNECT YOU WITH FILING RESOURCES

We work with a network of independent Authorized Representatives (AR) that can support in filing your claim through the Department of Labor.

COLLABORATE WITH YOUR AR

Our team of coordinators will work with you and your Authorized Representative throughout the filing process so you can understand and be prepared for next steps.

IMPAIRMENT RATING SUPPORT

Once you are approved for your white card, our team will immediately work with you and your Authorized Representative to support the process of applying for your first impairment rating.

STAY CONNECTED

Even after you receive your white card and impairment rating, we will remain connected through local events and networking opportunities.



“ Our team sees and appreciates the work in the atomic industry that you devoted to this nation. I look forward to learning more about your story and assisting you in getting the benefits you may be entitled to. ”

- Emily Canvasser, Benefits Coordinator



“ Your work in the atomic industry changed this nation. I am happy to be in a position to support you in your journey to getting the benefits you may be entitled to. I truly look forward to connecting with you! ”

- Shaun Blackman, Benefits Coordinator

EDUCATION



Did you know?



Home modifications related to your approved condition may be covered by your white card?

Common home modifications include:

- Ramps
- Safe flooring
- Grab bars, shower modifications
- Widen doorways

HOW TO GET HOME MODIFICATIONS COVERED

Modifications must be outlined in a Letter of Medical Necessity (LMN) from your physician deeming the modifications are necessary before you can send a request letter for coverage to the Department of Labor. Additionally, you must submit two or more contractor bids detailing the price and scope of work.

Physician Support

All home modifications must be related to your approved conditions and deemed medically necessary by your physician.

Collect Quotes

You will need to collect at least two detailed quotes for the modification from contractors. Quotes must include pricing and a detailed scope of work.

Submit to the DOL for Approval

Once you have a letter from your physician and quotes from contractors, you will need to submit a letter to the Department of Labor for approval.

**You can request payment directly to contractors if they are enrolled in the DOL's bill processing system or you can request to be reimbursed for the expense.*

If you are interested in learning more about home modifications, give us a call!

800.295.5846

Stay connected with us on the following page.



🌐 NuclearCarePartners.com/events

📘 @NuclearCarePartners

Continued from previous page.

CONNECTION

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We love connecting atomic heroes, and never want to miss an opportunity to shake your hand, thank you in person, hear your story and share your legacy. Throughout the year, we host a series of events dedicated to just that.

To stay in the know about events in your area follow us on Facebook and periodically check our website!

SUMMER
REUNIONS
COMING
SOON

Keep an eye in
your mailbox for an
exclusive invitation.

**In select city and states*

**Interested in us hosting
a reunion in your area?
We'd love to know!**

Scan the QR code to submit
your request today!



DOL UPDATE

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On Feb 28th, the Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (DEEOIC) announced the issuance of new medical benefits cards. **The updated cards will have new pharmacy information making the old cards unusable as of March 15, 2024.**

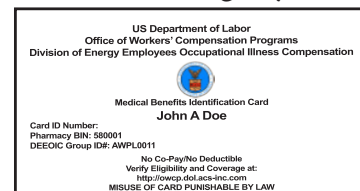
If you have not received your card or are having issues with your pharmacy we encourage you to reach out to the Acentra Customer Service number at **1-866-272-2682**.

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The Periodic Table of

Without the discovery and accessibility to naturally-occurring and synthetic-made elements, our nation's atomic history would tell a different story.

Use the clues below to fill in the words. See page 14 for answers.

ACROSS

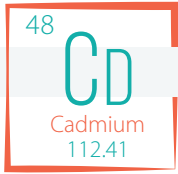
1. Commonly used to make balloons float
3. Thin foil commonly found in household kitchens
6. Atomic number 26 on the periodic table
7. Atomic number 8 on the periodic table
9. Named after the state of Tennessee, where it was first procured
11. Named after the dwarf planet Pluto
12. Displayed as a 'C' on the periodic table
13. Displayed as 'V' on the periodic table

DOWN

2. Named after the planet Uranus
4. Element named after Livermore, where it was first produced
5. The 'number 1' element
8. Displayed as 'Be' on the periodic table
10. Atomic number 22 on the periodic table

A crossword puzzle grid with 10 numbered starting points. The grid is composed of white squares for letters and empty space. The numbers are: 1 (down), 2 (across), 3 (across), 4 (across), 5 (down), 6 (across), 7 (across), 8 (down), 9 (across), and 10 (across).

CKD: CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE



Atomic workers who have been exposed to toxic metals or other hazardous chemicals may be at a higher risk of developing Chronic Kidney Disease and may be eligible to receive benefits under the DOL's EEOICPA program.



A worker at the Atomic Energy Commission's Y-12 Plant at Oak Ridge, TN examines a "biscuit" of uranium metal which contains about 93 percent U-235. Circa 1965. Courtesy of energy.gov.

Through education, Nuclear Care Partners believes in empowering former atomic workers with factual information about risk, exposure and disease correlation to catch symptoms in the early phases of disease progression.

Disease Facts:



Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) is when kidneys become damaged over time and can no longer clean toxins and waste from the blood. In its early stages, CKD may not have noticeable symptoms; blood samples can help detect the disease. This diagnosis cannot be reversed, but further damage may be prevented with proper care.

CKD affects the kidneys ability to:



- Remove waste and extra water
- Help make new red blood cells
- Balance important minerals
- Help maintain blood pressure
- Support bone health

CKD can also increase the risk of other health issues like heart disease and stroke.

EARLY DETECTION IS KEY



At every stage of Chronic Kidney Disease, Nuclear Care Partners care plans are focused on providing comprehensive nursing solutions for CKD patients including:

- Slowing the progression and minimizing the symptoms of CKD
- Aid in preventing further complications of Peritoneal Dialysis (PD) or Hemodialysis (HD)
- Administer specialized dialysis treatments in the comfort of patients' homes

MORE **1** IN
THAN SEVEN



14% of U.S. adults are estimated to have chronic kidney disease – an estimated 37 million Americans.

Source: NIH.gov

As the disease worsens, symptoms may include:

• • • • •

- More frequent urination
- Tiredness, weakness, and low energy
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling of hands, feet and ankles
- Shortness of breath
- Foamy or bubbly urination
- Puffy eyes
- Dry, itchy skin
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble sleeping
- Numbness in arms, legs or feet
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps
- High blood pressure
- Skin changes in color and texture

DO YOU HAVE
**CHRONIC
KIDNEY
DISEASE**
SYMPTOMS?

Please reach out to our team.

We would be happy to help you understand if you qualify to add CKD to your white card. If you do, our team can support you throughout the process, from diagnosis to filing.

Frowiss® EEOICPA CANCER CLAIMS

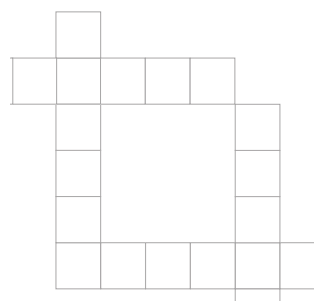
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CROSSWORD PUZZLE ANSWERS:

ACROSS

1. HELIUM
3. ALUMINIUM
6. IRON
7. OXYGEN
9. TENNESSINE
11. PLUTONIUM
12. CARBON
13. VANADIUM

DOWN

2. URANIUM
4. LIVERMORIUM
5. HYDROGEN
8. BERYLLIUM
10. TITANIUM



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WE LOVE THAT YOU LOVE ATOMIC HEALTH NEWS!

Just for being a loyal reader, we want to enter you in a drawing to win a walnut coin collection case and your choice of 3 atomic site challenge coins*!

**While supplies last, finish color varies, selection from Nuclear Care Partners' inventory. No cash value. One entry per qualified former atomic worker.*

***Swag bag content varies. Winners will be contacted end of May 2024.*

TO ENTER PLEASE CALL OR
VISIT OUR WEBSITE



800.295.5846

NuclearCarePartners.com/atomic-health-news



15 WINNERS!

Not a winner?

You will still receive a free swag bag jam-packed with goodies & gifts!**