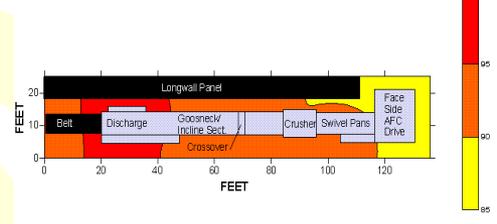# Overview of Hearing Loss Prevention Program

R. Güner Gürtunca PhD.

Mining Hearing Loss Prevention Workshop

June 21-22, 2005
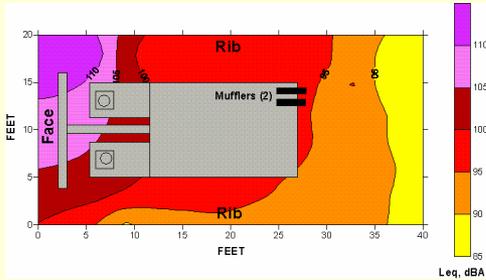
The Hearing Loss *Problem*

- High rates of hearing loss:
  - 50-90% of miners are **hearing impaired** by retirement age
- High exposures – difficult to control
  - 50-75% of miners have over 85dB(A)/8hrs exposure
- Low and ineffective usage of hearing protectors
  - Only 40-50% use protectors, and most use them improperly

SEVERAL BARRIERS TO REDUCING NIHL

- Gaps in knowledge of noise dose/source relationship.

- The unavailability of effective noise controls.

- Needs for worker education and worker empowerment.

- A related issue is the difficulty of communication in noisy workplaces by both hearing impaired and normal hearing workers.

4-Part Hearing Loss Program

1. Exposure source/dose measurement and tracking
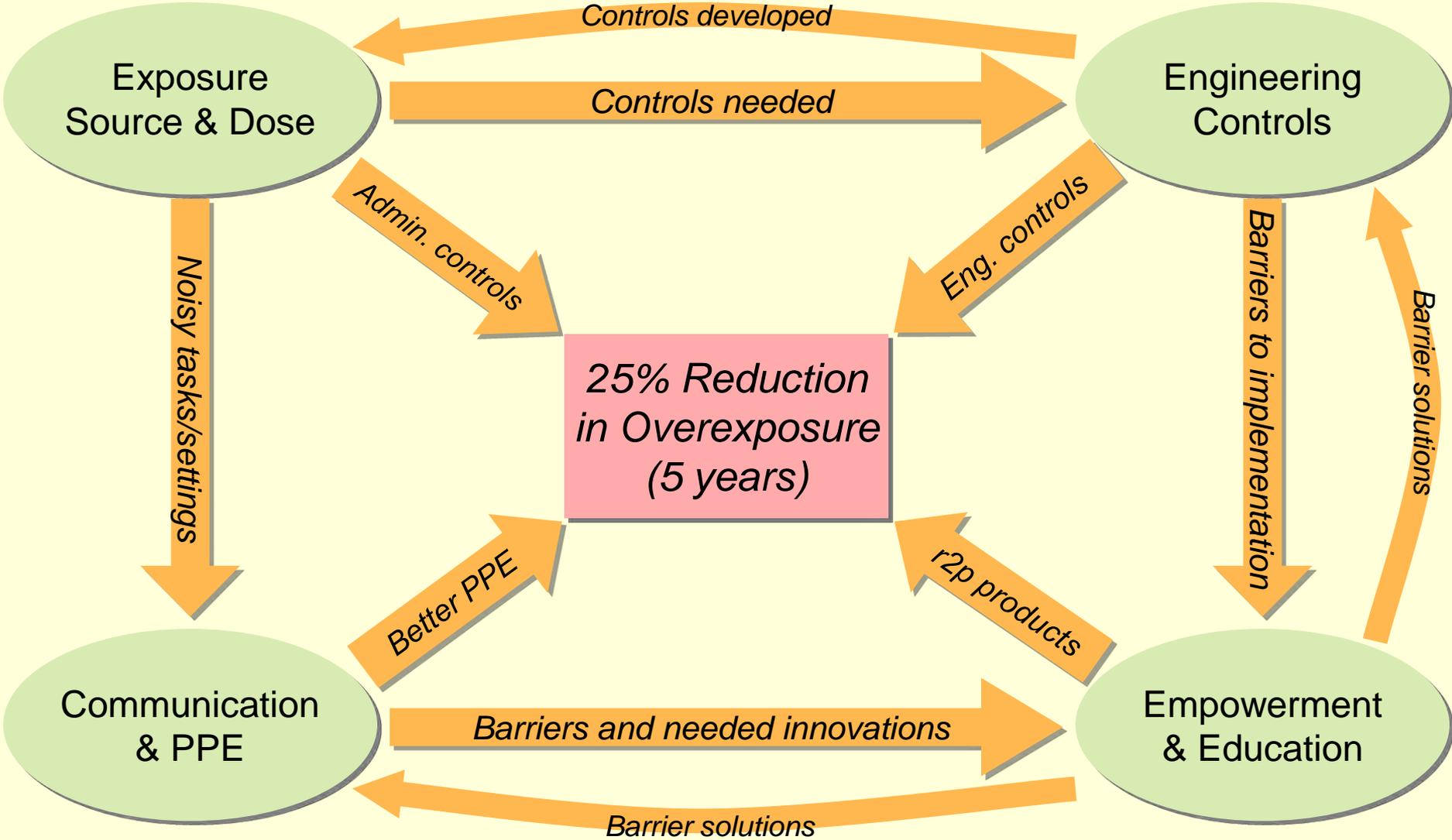
2. Engineering noise controls

3. Worker empowerment & education

4. Communication in noise & PPE

HLPB Goals

Hearing Loss Prevention Branch
FY05-Staffing (Current)

- **HLPB-21 FTE's**
  - **1-Chief**
  - **16-Professional (3 Team Leaders)**
  - **2-Technicians**
  - **1-OAA**
  - **1-Secretary**
- **Outside HLPB-1.60 FTE's**
- **Total FTE's-22.60**
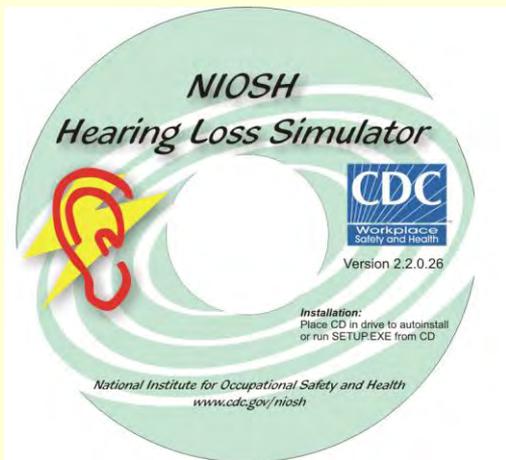- **4-5 new recruitments.**

Project/Program Breakdown

Program area	Project
Exposure source & dose **(1 project)**	Cross-Sectional Survey: Noise Exposure Patterns/Sources
Engineering noise controls **(5 projects)**	Study on Coal Cutting Noise Related to Continuous Mining Machines
	Engineering Noise Controls for Roof Bolters
	A Health Hazards Study of Surface Drilling Operations
	Coordination of the Engineering Noise Controls Projects
	Definition and Assessment of Engineering Noise Controls
Empowerment & education **(1 project)**	Health Communication Interventions for Hearing Loss Prevention
Communication & PPE **(1 project)**	Hearing Protection and Audibility Considerations

Majority of resources devoted to engineering noise controls

Hearing Loss Prevention Branch

Questions?