

# THE WTC RESPONDER HEALTH WATCH

## RESPONDERS' CONFERENCE GIVES HOPE AND HELP

**W**TC responders were not deterred by the rain on Saturday, April 30, 2005, from attending *9/11: We Will Never Forget*, a conference for WTC responders and their families, organized by the WTC Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program and funded by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

Nearly four years after September 11, 2001, it was clear that those who braved the rubble still need information regarding their health and benefits after the disaster. NIOSH Director, Dr. John Howard, gave the opening speech, in which he expressed thanks and appreciation for the heroic efforts of the WTC responders and stressed the importance of medical monitoring.

Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and a representative of Senator Hillary Clinton greeted the conference participants and reassured them that they are not forgotten in the halls of Congress. The New York Congressional delegation continues to fight for the funding needed on behalf of WTC responders.

The main purpose of the conference was to inform participants about what has been learned about medical and mental health effects of WTC exposure. Workshops addressed WTC health and emotional concerns, and offered advice on how to file for Workers' Compensation and other benefit programs. To make the conference meaningful for all participants, workshops were offered in Spanish and Polish, and simultaneous translation was available for the morning presentations and workshops conducted in English. A dozen organizations serving the 9/11 responder community had tables of information for conference participants. The conference also served as a clearinghouse for 9/11-related information.

However, the 200 workers, volunteers and family members who showed up that day experienced a lot more than presentations and workshops. They found a community

continued on page 2



DC 37 member Travis Smith speaks out alongside (right) NY Congressional Representatives Carolyn Maloney, Steve Israel, and Jerry Nadler at a press conference in Washington, D.C.

## PLEASE RETURN \$125 MILLION: INJURED AND ILL WTC WORKERS ASK LEGISLATORS IN WASHINGTON

**J**ust after dawn on July 21, 2005, dozens of workers boarded a Washington, D.C.-bound bus in front of the AFSCME DC 37 headquarters. The trip, coordinated by Lee Clarke, Safety and Health Director of District Council 37, NYC's largest municipal union, aimed to explain to legislators why these funds are critically needed by WTC responders.

After September 11, 2001, \$175 million was allocated by Congress to the NYS Workers' Compensation Board to ensure that 9/11-related claims were handled quickly. Almost four years after the attacks, \$125 million remained unspent, and the current administration took the money back.

Workers on the bus, including NYC employees, construction workers, health care workers, 9/11 volunteers, and others, met with key members of Congress and their staff. The workers explained that although some of the money remained unspent, it is still of vital importance to those who were exposed. The need remains for funds to monitor and

continued on page 2

## Please Return \$125 Million

continued from page 1

treat the health of 9/11 responders, many of whom can no longer work or have reduced ability to work as a result of their 9/11-related exposures.

At a press conference held by several members of the New York City Congressional delegation, including Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney and Congressman Vito Fossello, workers voiced their concerns. For some, this was the first opportunity to tell their stories of struggling with failing health and financial and family difficulties due to their WTC work. Many lack health insurance after losing their jobs because of illness or injury, and many were denied compensation despite ongoing health problems.

“Unless funds for medical monitoring and treatment remain available, the problems responders face will only get worse. This money is needed to take care of people who acted heroically,” said Lee Clarke.

Earlier in the fall, the U.S. Senate voted to restore the \$125 million, but Congressional budget negotiators decided to take back the unspent money. In the days leading up to Thanksgiving, New York officials worked diligently to ensure that the \$125 million would instead be included in a Katrina emergency relief bill, to be voted on in December. This latest reversal, renewing hope for thousands of ill workers, did not come without intense negotiations and lobbying by a united New York State Congressional Delegation, including Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Chuck Schumer, and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, health and safety advocates, and scores of 9/11 responders.

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## Responders Conference Gives Hope and Help

continued from page 1

of people who shared their unforgettable involvement in the WTC recovery effort. For many, it was their first opportunity to talk with others who understood what they'd gone through.

“The conference gave me a sense that it's possible to get help,” said Kevin Mount, a conference participant, “the ability to network with others who'd done the same work, and share stories about what happened to us. Knowing you're not alone made a real difference.”

## A GOOD FIRST STEP—WTC DISABILITY PENSION LEGISLATION

Some workers in the public sector have recently gained a new benefit. On June 15, 2005, New York State Governor George Pataki signed a bill that will ease the way for some New York City and New York State public sector workers involved in 9/11-related rescue, recovery, or clean-up work, to qualify for disability pensions. The bill provides a presumption that some illnesses were caused by WTC exposures. Workers will still have to provide medical documentation to show that they are disabled from their illness. They will also have to meet certain requirements, including having had a pre-employment physical. Workers have until June 13, 2007, to register for this benefit. All public employees who may be eligible are strongly encouraged to register now, even if they are not sick, to preserve their right to this benefit in the future.

In order to qualify for the disability pension, workers must be diagnosed with an illness that is presumed to be related to their 9/11-related work. The illnesses covered include respiratory problems, skin disorders, gastrointestinal diseases, and psychological conditions. Some illnesses that are covered are slow-starting and not expected to affect people for a number of years to come, including cancer and asbestos-related lung scarring.

Workers must have worked 40 hours before September 12, 2002, doing WTC-related work in one of several locations specified in the law. However, if a worker was injured early and could not accrue the 40 hours, he or she may still be eligible.

The exact rules and procedures workers must follow to apply for these benefits are still being developed by the seven pension plans covered by this legislation.

Once the rules have been set, medical documentation for individual cases will need to be established. WTC responders are encouraged to have a Monitoring Program examination and to follow up with any referrals for treatment, both to receive proper medical care and to qualify for benefits.

The AFL-CIO is working on new legislation that will broaden coverage to all public sector employees who performed rescue, recovery, and clean-up work following the 9/11 attacks.

### Web sites for Pension Forms

**For New York City (NYCERS) members:**  
NYCERS Retirement and Benefits — Notice of Participation in WTC Rescue, Recovery or Clean-up Operations (form #622)  
[http://www.nycers.org/\(rj2rfl45fbio1ia1k3byugi1\)/Pdf/forms/622.pdf](http://www.nycers.org/(rj2rfl45fbio1ia1k3byugi1)/Pdf/forms/622.pdf)

**For New York State (NYSERS) members:**  
World Trade Center Notice for Members of the New York State and Local Retirement System (form RS 6047-N)  
<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/retire/news/wtc/wtc-notice-rs6047-n.pdf>

**For New York City Police Department Pension Fund members:**  
[http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycppf/pdf/wtc\\_lawfactsheet.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/nycppf/pdf/wtc_lawfactsheet.pdf)

## CLINICAL CENTERS OPEN

The following centers are open for both initial visits and for follow-up visits in the Monitoring Program:

### Manhattan

Mount Sinai School of Medicine — I. J. Selikoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine  
Telephone: 212-241-1554

Bellevue Hospital Center/NYU School of Medicine — Division of Occupational & Environmental Medicine  
Telephone: 212-562-4572

### Queens

Queens Ground Zero Worker Health Watch, Queens College  
Telephone: 718-670-4216

### Long Island — Suffolk County

Long Island Occupational and Environmental Health Center, SUNY Stony Brook  
Telephone: 631-642-9100

### Long Island — Nassau County

Nassau University Medical Center, Pulmonary and Critical Care Division  
Telephone: 631-642-9100

### New Jersey — Piscataway

UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Institute  
Telephone: 732-445-0123, Ext. 601

### New York City

Fire Department - City of New York, Bureau of Health Services  
Telephone: 718-999-1858 (for uniformed Fire and EMS staff)

For examinations outside the New York City metropolitan area, please call our program at 888-702-0630 for information.

The following centers also offer medical and mental health treatment services funded by the American Red Cross:

### Manhattan

Mount Sinai School of Medicine—WTC Health Effects Treatment Program  
Telephone: 212-241-9059

Bellevue Hospital Center/NYU School of Medicine—WTC Health Effects Treatment Program  
Telephone: 212-562-1720

### Long Island — Suffolk County

Long Island Occupational and Environmental Health Center, SUNY Stony Brook  
Telephone: 631-642-9100

### Long Island — Nassau County

Nassau University Medical Center, Pulmonary and Critical Care Division  
Telephone: 631-642-9100

### New Jersey — Piscataway

UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Institute  
Telephone: 732-445-0123, Ext. 601

### New York City

FDNY Bureau of Health Services, WTC Treatment Program  
Telephone: 718-999-1858 (for uniformed Fire and EMS staff)

### Outside NYC Metropolitan area

Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics  
Telephone: 888-347-2632

## TWO WINNERS IN THE NAME-OUR-NEWSLETTER CONTEST

We received dozens of clever and catchy entries. In the end, we decided to combine two of the best and name our newsletter *The WTC Responder Health Watch*. Meet the winners below.



**Joann Stampfli Treadwell** is a Registered Nurse whose husband, James, a police officer in the South Bronx, was a first responder at the WTC on 9/11/2001. As an oncology/

hematology nurse for the last 10 years, Joann knows the importance of early disease detection. "I look forward to a long and active life with James, and monitoring his health is one step toward that future."



**Lawrence Stelter** is an Assistant Architect with the NYC Department of Buildings. After 9/11/2001, while inspecting buildings surrounding the WTC site, he was impressed by the selfless com-

mitment and patriotic acts of WTC responders. "Going for health monitoring is another patriotic act, because it will give us important information about WTC exposures that will help others."

**The World Trade Center Medical Monitoring Program  
Data and Coordination Center  
Mount Sinai School of Medicine  
1 Gustave Levy Place, Box 1057  
New York, NY 10029  
tel 888-702-0630  
fax 212-241-7235**

Feedback is welcome.

To update contact info or clinical center preference, call us or visit [www.WTCexams.org](http://www.WTCexams.org) and click on **Forms**.

## WTC RESPONDER URGES RETURN VISIT

**F**ormer detective and Bronx native Paul Moloney was a 20-year veteran in the New York Police Department when he retired in 2002. At his wife's urging, Mr. Moloney became part of our program in November 2002. Nearly three years later, he still believes in the purpose of the program and plans on continuing to participate. We talked with him about his reasons why, as well as his work on the WTC recovery effort.



Retired NYPD detective, Paul Moloney, with his three daughters.

### Tell us a little about the work you did on the WTC site.

I was there on 9/11 doing rescue work. For 12 days I did hand-digging and was part of the "bucket brigade." I shuttled between Ground Zero and the landfill on Staten Island, where I sifted through the debris until October 2001, when my health kept me from continuing.

### What led you to participate in the World Trade Center Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program?

My wife, who works in the medical profession, kept track of the news about health effects resulting from the disaster, and found out about the program. She was the one who made sure I made an appointment.

### Are you glad she did?

Yes. Everyone I saw there was great. I got referrals I needed for

specialists to take care of my lungs and my sinuses. It was also a nice environment; I felt comfortable in the clinic.

### Did you take advantage of our non-medical services, such as social work?

A social worker took time and explained to me all the financial benefits programs I could apply for. I found that health information and educational materials were readily available during my appointment.

I didn't take advantage of the mental health services because I already have good support systems, but I think the services are important.

### Will you continue in the program?

Without a doubt. I've got three girls and one boy—my family knows I get proper referrals and treatment there. Also, I believe in knowing the long-term effects of this disaster. The personnel are helpful and thoughtful. My doctor is aces.

### What would you say to your fellow WTC responders who are unsure about returning to the program?

Not many other people out there know what went on after 9/11, or what's going on now with people who worked down there. The folks at this program do know, because they've been working on it for the last few years. Besides, even if participating doesn't help me, it might help other people. That keeps me going back.

## ASK THE DOCTOR

Dr. Stephen Levin is the Director of the WTC Medical Monitoring Program's Data and Coordination Center



**QUESTION:** I keep hearing about people in my union either getting cancer or at least being worried about it. What kinds of cancer are WTC responders likely to see as a result of their exposures?

**ANSWER:** Cancer doesn't show up right away after you've been exposed to a cancer-causing substance. Depending on the type of cancer, it can take anywhere from 5 to 30 years to see a cancer after exposure to a cancer-causing agent begins. Cancers that have developed already among WTC responders almost certainly were not caused by exposures at the WTC site. But there were some substances found at the WTC site that are known to cause cancer.

Most cancers that develop from exposures to substances like dioxin or other by-products from the fires, or from asbestos, usually take over 20 years to show up.

Benzene, however, which is produced when plastic burns, can cause leukemia. Leukemia is a cancer of the blood that can occur as early as 4-5 years after exposure.

New methods of early cancer detection are being developed, and more will be available in the next ten years. This will give doctors a way to begin treatment early, when it can be much more effective.

The WTC Medical Monitoring Program plans to seek funding so that responders who participate in the program can benefit from these new methods of early detection over the next 20 years. Extending the Monitoring Program would provide an opportunity to save the lives of those who develop cancers caused by their rescue and recovery efforts (or by their on-the-job exposures in their regular work).



# THE WORLD TRADE CENTER MEDICAL MONITORING PROGRAM CLINICAL CENTER AT MOUNT SINAI

One Gustave Levy Place, Box 1057, New York, NY 10029 1-888-702-0630/Fax 212-241-1850

## TREATMENT AVAILABLE FOR WTC-RELATED ILLNESSES AND INJURIES

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICE UNIT LAUNCHED TO PROVIDE  
COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

Four years after September 11, 2001, many WTC responders still require medical treatment for illnesses and injuries that occurred as a result of their WTC work.

Serigne Thioune is one of them. A highway repair worker, Mr. Thioune was at the WTC site on 9/11/01, and continued driving debris to the Fresh Kills landfill in Staten Island for three months. Mr. Thioune now lives every day with asthma. He used to suffer from a chronic cough and itchy nose, as well as insomnia—conditions that may have resulted from his WTC exposures.

The WTC Health Effects Treatment Program (HETP) was founded in January 2003 to respond to the medical needs of WTC responders such as Mr. Thioune. The program provides WTC-related medical treatment and social work services at no out-of-pocket expense to workers and volunteers who performed rescue, recovery, clean-up, and restoration duties in the aftermath of the WTC disaster. Currently funded by a September 11 recovery grant from the American Red Cross Liberty Disaster Relief Fund, the HETP has treated more than 1,500 patients. The program is based in Manhattan with centers in Queens and Yonkers.

Doctors at the HETP specialize in Occupational Medicine, with additional expertise in Rehabilitation Medicine, Internal Medicine, and Pulmonary Medicine—specialties that are needed by WTC responders.

In addition, the Treatment Program has begun offering a new service—the Diagnostic Service Unit (DSU). The DSU provides speedy access to additional testing, interpretation of test results, and coordination of follow-up care for WTC responders whose screening examination results warrant further medical evaluation.

Due to their medical problems, many WTC responders stopped working or worked fewer hours, which has resulted in reduced income and often a loss of health coverage. The HETP offers social work services to assist patients with Workers' Compensation claims, disability applications,



Marvin Bethea, patient and activist (right), greeted by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (left) and Dr. Robin Herbert, Director of the WTC Medical Monitoring Program's Clinical Center and Treatment Program at Mount Sinai (center), at an American Red Cross press event.

## MARVIN BETHEA: PARAMEDIC, WTC RESPONDER, WORKER ADVOCATE

Marvin Bethea was a paramedic for over twenty years and a member of SEIU Local 1199 when he rushed into the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, to help others to safety. Although Mr. Bethea had to stop working due to complications from his WTC work, he remains active and involved in speaking out on issues important to WTC responders—namely, health care and benefits. "I'd always had access to health care, but then it stopped when I had to stop working—it opened my eyes. Our health problems won't just go away, and there needs to be recognition of that. It's important to get the message out there."

Mr. Bethea is a strong advocate for all responders. As part of the effort to keep \$125 million of federal emergency funds meant to assist WTC responders and volunteers from being retracted, Mr. Bethea traveled to Washington, D.C., several times. He spoke personally to lawmakers about the need for these resources to persuade them to keep the money available to people whose courage and hard work helped New York recover. He has also lobbied in Albany for an expansion of pension benefits for EMS workers employed by private hospitals.

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## Treatment Program continued from front

vocational rehabilitation, mental health service coordination, access to general health care, and other benefits. These services are offered free of charge.

Mr. Thioune, the highway repair worker, admits he has greatly benefited from the program. "My doctor here has helped me get rid of the cough, itchy nose and insomnia I used to have. My asthma is under control. And when I come here, I'm met by nice people."

**For information, call 212-241-9059.**

## FREE EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

For participants in the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring Program at Mount Sinai

Come learn about health issues, benefits and other topics relevant to WTC responders

### WTC Health Concerns

English workshops:

Tuesday, January 10, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Tuesday, March 14, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Tuesday, May 9, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Spanish workshops:

Wednesday, January 18, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, March 15, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, May 17, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Polish workshops:

Thursday, January 19, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Thursday, March 16, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Thursday, May 18, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

### Accessing Workers' Compensation & Related Benefits

English workshops:

Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 19, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, June 21, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Spanish workshops:

Wednesday, February 1, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 5, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, June 7, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Polish workshops:

Wednesday, February 8, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, April 12, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

Wednesday, June 14, 2006, 5:30 - 7:30 pm

We welcome suggestions on workshop topics.

LOCATION: 10 East 101st Street (Between Madison and 5th Avenues), Room 130

For registration or information in English, please call 212-241-0040 or e-mail [Annie.Lok@mssm.edu](mailto:Annie.Lok@mssm.edu).

For registration or information in Spanish and Polish, please call 888-702-0630.

# WORLD TRADE CENTER MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AVAILABLE

212-241-8462

The Mount Sinai Mental Health Monitoring and Intervention program was established in July 2002, in conjunction with the World Trade Center Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program, to respond to the emotional needs of all the workers and volunteers who so bravely and heroically gave of themselves during all phases of the 9/11 disaster. The following is a list of our services.

**All services are free and confidential.**

**INDIVIDUAL THERAPY** – Talk therapy one-on-one.

The goal of this treatment is to relieve emotional symptoms, change behaviors, patterns, and habits by increased insight and self-awareness.

**GROUP THERAPY** – Two to eight individuals work with a therapist-facilitator. The goal of this treatment is to utilize peer support and mutual understanding to change behaviors and patterns.

**COUPLES THERAPY** – The couple work with a therapist. The goal of this treatment is to improve communication and understanding between the couple so they are able to solve problems together and have realistic expectations of one another.

**MEDICATION** – Exposure to severe stress can cause chemical imbalances, which can affect energy level, sleep, mood, and sex drive. Short-term use of non-addictive medications has been shown to relieve these and other post-disaster mental health problems in many people.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION CLAIMS** – The mental health provider works with the patient to apply for worker compensation benefits.

**EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND REFERRAL** – The mental health provider gives the individual, family, or group, pertinent information about appropriate financial, community, and social support services.

## The WTC Monitoring Program at Mount Sinai Has Moved—Just Around the Corner

As of September 12, 2005, our program will see patients at the following address:

10 E. 101st Street, 2nd Floor  
(Between Madison and Fifth Avenues)  
New York, NY 10029

Telephone and fax numbers remain the same:  
Tel. 212-241-3355 • Fax. 212-241-9052