

RECENT MEDICAL FINDINGS **OF ONGOING 9/11 HEALTH IMPACTS**

(Compiled by the Office of Congresswoman Carolyn B. Maloney - January 2005)

Four medical reports published in late 2004 substantiate the widely accepted understanding that 9/11 and its aftermath has caused severe and lasting illness among Ground Zero responders, as well as in residents and workers in the World Trade Center (WTC) region.

1) A September 2004 report summarizing data from the WTC Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program found that a substantial portion of Ground Zero responders exposed to air hazards during the rescue and recovery effort have experienced an onset of upper and lower respiratory conditions or exacerbated pre-9/11 upper and lower respiratory conditions.¹ The study analyzed a 1,138 person subset of data collected from the Program's initial 11,768 participants involved in the September 11th response.

The results indicate a substantial onset of lower respiratory (57.5%) and upper respiratory (69.8%) problems. Major symptoms included dry cough, shortness of breath, stuffy nose, congestion, throat irritation, and sneezing. Of those with a previous respiratory condition, 60.9 percent reported that the condition worsened while working or volunteering on the recovery efforts.

2) A second medical report, published in November 2004, has found that New York firefighters who had been highly exposed to WTC dust continued to show significantly higher levels of inflammation and particulate matter deposition in their throats and lungs ten months after the disaster, compared to a control group of firefighters not involved in the WTC response.²

3) In addition to the ongoing health impacts suffered by 9/11 rescue and recovery workers, several studies have shown significant and lasting health impacts among residents and those working near the World Trade Center in lower-Manhattan. On December 20, 2004, a study on the respiratory health of residents around Ground Zero found, "the data demonstrated an increased rate of new onset and persistent respiratory health effects in residents near the

¹ Levin, S.M., et. al. "Physical Health Status of World Trade Center Rescue and Recovery Workers and Volunteers – New York City, July 2002 – August 2004." MMWR. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Sept. 10, 2004. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5335a1.htm>

² Fireman, Elizabeth M., et. al. "Induced Sputum Assessment in New York City Firefighters Exposed to World Trade Center Dust." Environmental Health Perspectives, November 2004 (Volume 112, Number 15).

former WTC compared to the control population.”³

Specifically, new-onset respiratory symptoms were described by 55.8% of residents in the “exposed-area” compared to 20.1% in the “control area” after the disaster. In addition, “persistent new-onset symptoms” were identified in 26.4 percent vs. 7.5 percent in residents in the exposed area vs residents in the control area respectively.

4) In November of 2004, New York City health officials released the results of a two-year study measuring the effects of air pollution on those in the vicinity of the WTC site.⁴ After interviewing 61,087 victims, officials compiled the data into the WTC Health Registry, the largest health registry ever attempted in the United States. Even though some workers and residents who may have been most heavily affected by the disaster did not participate in the Registry as a result of legitimate concern among labor organizations that it was designed and implemented without proper coordination with affected populations, the study still confirms high levels of persistent respiratory symptoms months after rescue and recovery work had stopped. Of those interviewed, 42 percent experienced shortness of breath, 47 percent experienced sinus problems, while other respiratory problems included wheezing, persistent coughing, and throat irritation. Eight percent of registry members suffered from symptoms of psychological distress, 60 percent higher than the city average.

³ Reibman, Joan, et. al. “The World Trade Center Residents’ Respiratory Health Study: New Onset Respiratory Symptoms and Pulmonary Function.” [Environmental Health Perspectives Online](#).

⁴ The New York Times. “Thousands Near 9/11 Attack Reported Ill Effects, U.S. Says.” 23 November 2004.