



Highlights of [GAO-08-429T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Six years after the attack on the World Trade Center (WTC), concerns persist about health effects experienced by WTC responders and the availability of health care services for those affected. Several federally funded programs provide screening, monitoring, or treatment services to responders. GAO has previously reported on the progress made and implementation problems faced by these WTC health programs.

This testimony is based primarily on GAO's testimony, *September 11: Improvements Needed in Availability of Health Screening and Monitoring Services for Responders* ([GAO-07-1229T](#), Sept. 10, 2007), which updated GAO's report, *September 11: HHS Needs to Ensure the Availability of Health Screening and Monitoring for All Responders* ([GAO-07-892](#), July 23, 2007). In this testimony, GAO discusses efforts by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) to provide services for nonfederal responders residing outside the New York City (NYC) area.

For the July 2007 report, GAO reviewed program documents and interviewed Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials, grantees, and others. GAO updated selected information in August and September 2007 and conducted work for this statement in January 2008.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-429T](#). For more information, contact Cynthia A. Bascetta at (202) 512-7114 or [bascettac@gao.gov](mailto:bascettac@gao.gov).

## SEPTEMBER 11

### Improvements Still Needed in Availability of Health Screening and Monitoring Services for Responders outside the New York City Area

#### What GAO Found

In July 2007, following a reexamination of the status of the WTC health programs, GAO recommended that the Secretary of HHS take expeditious action to ensure that health screening and monitoring services are available to all people who responded to the WTC attack, regardless of where they reside. As of January 2008, the department has not responded to this recommendation.

As GAO testified in September 2007, NIOSH has not ensured the availability of screening and monitoring services for nonfederal responders residing outside the NYC area, although it has taken steps toward expanding the availability of these services. In late 2002, NIOSH arranged for a network of occupational health clinics to provide screening services. This effort ended in July 2004, and until June 2005 NIOSH did not fund screening or monitoring services for nonfederal responders outside the NYC area. In June 2005, NIOSH funded the Mount Sinai School of Medicine Data and Coordination Center (DCC) to provide screening and monitoring services; however, DCC had difficulty establishing a nationwide network of providers and contracted with only 10 clinics in seven states. In 2006, NIOSH began to explore other options for providing these services, and in 2007 it took steps toward expanding the provider network.