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**MAYOR BLOOMBERG ACCEPTS PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXPAND  
RESPONSE TO HEALTH IMPACTS OF ATTACK ON THE WORLD TRADE CENTER**

*15 Recommendations Offered by Report Call for Full Funding of Treatment Centers, New Medical Working Group, WTC Health Coordinator, Re-opening of Victim Compensation Fund*

*Identifies \$150 Million Annual Need for Essential Health  
and Mental Health Treatment and Monitoring*

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg today accepted a comprehensive set of recommendations that will seek to ensure a sustained, high-quality public health response for individuals experiencing 9/11-related health conditions. The recommendations include requesting \$150 million per year in federal funds for essential health and mental health programs; establishing new systems to keep policy-makers, physicians, and those who need assistance aware of emerging issues; and removing from the courtroom the painful issue of compensation by establishing a new Victim Compensation Fund. The recommendations were made by the World Trade Center Health Panel, a group the Mayor appointed in September 2006 to assess the sufficiency of state and federal resources to address ongoing health needs and to ensure maximum coordination between City agencies. The report estimates that the health impacts of 9/11 cost the health care system \$393 million per year. Deputy Mayor for Administration Edward Skyler and Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Linda Gibbs, who co-led the effort, joined the Mayor for the announcement.

“New York has always taken care of its own – and we are not about to abandon the men and women who helped lift our city back onto its feet during our greatest time of need,” said Mayor Bloomberg. “Today’s report is the first comprehensive look at their health needs and the path we need to follow to make sure they, and all those who develop health related issues, get the first rate medical care they deserve.”

*Panel Findings*

Among the report’s key findings are the following:

- There is no stable federal funding for 9/11 research and monitoring & treatment programs for first responders and the New York City Police Department (NYPD) has never received *(more)* any federal funding for treatment or monitoring. The New York City Fire Department (FDNY) Medical Screening and Treatment program and the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring program at Mount Sinai are running out of operating funds.
- Although the FDNY and NYPD have had strong monitoring and treatment resources available, New York City’s World Trade Center health policies and treatment options are inconsistent across agencies.

- There is no federal funding for treatment of residents and other non first-responders. The World Trade Center Environmental Health Center at Bellevue Hospital is almost entirely City-funded and likely will need to be expanded.
- Many residents and other non-responders aren't aware of the Bellevue treatment program, or do not know that they are eligible to seek treatment.
- Although Red Cross funding for mental health treatment programs is ending, treatment capacity likely will need to be expanded since World Trade Center-related mental health problems persist.
- There is no central and accessible source of information about World Trade Center health effects and treatment options. This leads to confusion, especially for those not participating in existing treatment programs or the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's World Trade Center Health Registry.

#### *Sustained Federal Funding for Treatment*

The report recommends that the City strengthen the support for entities providing medical care for those with 9/11-related symptoms. The report classifies three clinical centers as centers of excellence: the FDNY Medical Screening and Treatment program, which treats Firefighters and Emergency Medical Services personnel; the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring program at Mount Sinai, which treats first responders such as members of the NYPD and construction contractors; and Bellevue Hospital's World Trade Center Environmental Health Center, which treats any individual bearing symptoms of World Trade Center health effects. Each center of excellence has developed a specialty in a particular area. The report recognizes that new sources of long-term funding are required to keep the clinics open beyond the end of this year, and in the case of the Bellevue WTC Environmental Health Center, expand to treat more patients in impacted populations and open at two other sites if required to meet these needs. The report calls for additional federal funding to sustain the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's World Trade Center Health Registry and the Police Department's expanded monitoring of over 34,000 members who responded to the attacks and the subsequent recovery effort. To this day, the NYPD, which represents the largest group of first responders, has not received any federal funding for monitoring or treatment.

#### *Expanded Tracking, Communication and Agency Coordination*

Recognizing that 9/11-related health issues have evolved and will continue to do so, the report calls for the creation of a standing Medical Working Group to review existing and emerging scientific research and summarize the information in an annual report to the Mayor.

*(more)*

The panel will include experts from inside and outside of government. A new Citywide WTC Health Coordinator will make sure that the Medical Working Group's information is conveyed to the relevant populations, that policies among City agencies are uniform to the extent possible, and that outreach and communication is effective and widespread. The WTC Health Coordinator will also work with the Health and Hospitals Corporation to expand participation in the Bellevue WTC Environmental Health Center to all those who are eligible, and actively promote enrollment in the state's workers compensation registry before the August 14, 2007 deadline. The coordinator will also oversee a new World Trade Center Health Resources website that will serve as a one-stop resource for current 9/11-related health information. The Office of Emergency Management is called upon, in a separate recommendation, to assess and enhance, as necessary, the environmental and health safety aspects of the City's disaster response plans.

#### *Compensate Claims Instead of Fight Them*

Finally, the Mayor also endorsed the recommendation that Congress re-open the Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) so that victims can quickly get fair compensation for injuries suffered as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. At the same time the VCF is re-opened, the report says Congress

should eliminate the liability of the City and its contractors for claims arising out of the clean-up at the World Trade Center and, since the World Trade Center Captive Insurance Company would no longer be needed, Congress could also liquidate the insurance company and put its \$1 billion into the re-opened VCF. The new proposal would use federal money to compensate claims without the need to prove fault on the part of the City, its contractors or anyone else and would eliminate the delay and expense inherent in litigation. The re-opened Victims Compensation Fund would address those individuals who couldn't seek its help before the Fund's closure in December 2003. Kenneth Feinberg, the special master of the Victims Compensation Fund, is mentioned in the report as an ideal candidate to be called to serve as the steward of the re-opened fund.

*Panel Recommendations*

The full report of the panel, including the 15 recommendations, is available on the City website [www.nyc.gov](http://www.nyc.gov).

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