

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 2, 2009

Dear Colleague,

We're writing to highlight an issue of great importance: the lingering health effects of the terrorist attacks of September 11. This is an issue that affects each and every one of our states, as people selflessly came from across the country to help clean up and rebuild in the aftermath of the attacks. Many of these heroic rescue and recovery workers, as well as community members, school children and others who were exposed to harmful toxins and/or witnessed traumatic events, continue to suffer the physical and mental health effects of the attacks more than eight years later.

Please find attached the 2009 report from the WTC Medical Working Group in New York City. Mayor Bloomberg appointed this group of health experts in 2007 to review 9/11 scientific research and services on an annual basis to better inform policymakers. The WTC Medical Working Group's report summarizes the most recent published clinical and epidemiological research. It substantively documents a large scale and continuing health problem among individuals who were exposed on 9/11 or in the weeks and months that followed.

Much of this research is based on new data from the federally funded WTC Health Registry. The WTC Health Registry is the largest post-disaster exposure registry in U.S. history, enrolling more than 71,000 exposed individuals to be tracked for up to 20 years. Nearly 20 percent of Registry enrollees reside outside of the New York region, with some in every Congressional district. This reflects the fact that people came from all over the country to help.

Some notable findings included in the report are:

- A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) showed that 10% of adults enrolled in the WTC Health Registry have reported a new diagnosis of asthma at some point since 2001. This is three times as many adults as would be expected in the general population over a six-year period.
- Nearly one in five enrollees (19%) in the WTC Health Registry has had probable posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at some point since 2001.
- Several recently published studies suggest that WTC-related mental and physical health conditions often can occur together. In fact, 10-25% of people currently in treatment at the WTC Centers of Excellence are being treated for both mental and physical health conditions.
- There have been 42,410 patients screened and/or monitored in the New York City area in the publicly funded WTC health programs, and 15,688 patients in these programs have required treatment for either physical or mental health conditions.

The complete report can be accessed at www.nyc.gov/9-11healthinfo.

The World Trade Center (WTC) health programs that are treating and monitoring those who are sick, or who could become sick, do not have the sustained federal funding needed to ensure that those who get sick can get the care they need. That is why we introduced S. 1334, The 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2009, which extends and improves protections and services to individuals affected by the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center on September 11,

2001. We need a permanent, comprehensive program to deliver efficient, cost-effective care, monitoring, and treatment as well as fair and balanced compensation for their economic losses.

In addition to providing monitoring and treatment for individuals in the New York City area, as well as funding for continued research, the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act also would provide funding for a national program that would make it possible for rescue and recovery workers in your state to receive permanent care for any health condition they are experiencing as a result of their heroic service to the nation after the 2001 terrorist attacks on the nation. The bill also would make it possible for them to be compensated for any losses they have experienced as a result of 9/11 health problems.

Passage of the 9/11 Health and Compensation would send a strong message to your constituents: when heroic acts of patriotism endanger their health, the country will support them as they try to heal from the harms inflicted by our enemies. It is a message that will encourage them to again rise to the occasion, as so many did after September 11, 2001.

We urge your support of this important bill.

Sincerely,



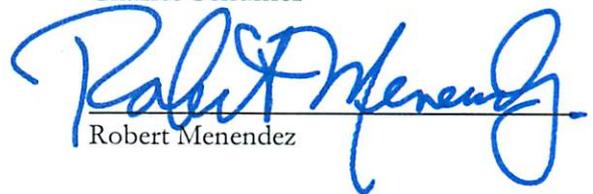
Kirsten Gillibrand



Charles Schumer



Frank Lautenberg



Robert Menendez

Charles E. Bell

Robert A. Bell

William C. Bell

George H. Bell