



WORLD
TRADE
CENTER
HEALTH REGISTRY

9/11 and Beyond

Fall 2026 — 25th Anniversary Issue

Looking Forward: Still Listening, Still Caring

As the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Registry reaches 25 years of research, outreach, and service, its original mission to study the long-term health effects of 9/11 exposure remains as important as ever. We are also preparing for the future by adapting new technologies, expanding communication efforts, and strengthening connections with enrollees to continue this work for decades to come.

In the years ahead, the Registry plans to continue advancing research into emerging health concerns, including aging-related conditions, mental health, quality of life, and other long-term impacts that may evolve over time. Future surveys and studies will remain essential in understanding how exposure affects people across their lifespan.

The Registry is doubling down on efforts to make health-related information more accessible, personal, and meaningful. The Registry's work has always been about people — listening to their experiences, learning from their stories, and helping connect them with resources and care.

We are deeply grateful for your trust, commitment, and lasting contributions to this ongoing and vital work.

With deepest appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Farfel". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Mark" and "Farfel" being capitalized and prominent.

Mark Farfel, ScD
Director



Enrollee Spotlight

Barbara Minsky lived on John Street in Lower Manhattan for more than 30 years and experienced the 9/11 disaster firsthand. Returning to her dust-filled loft, she rescued her two cats before being evacuated. Deeply affected by the disaster, she later created a series of works reflecting her experience, many during a residency at the Santa Fe Art Institute for artists impacted by 9/11.



Minsky B. Safe Horizons.

To watch a video of Barbara telling her “9/11 story,” visit nyc.gov/911testimonials.



Minsky B. Home Sweet Home.

25th Anniversary Town Hall

In September, view a special town hall about the 25th anniversary of 9/11, featuring remarks from NYC Health Department and Registry leadership. The event recognizes the ongoing contributions of Registry enrollees, shares key findings from 25 years of research, and reaffirms the City’s commitment to monitoring and addressing the long-term health effects of 9/11. Enrollees will receive invitations by email.

Visit nyc.gov/911anniversary for more information.

25 Years Later: Why the Registry’s Work Still Matters

In the days and months following 9/11, it became clear that the effects of the event would not end when the smoke cleared. More than 400,000 people had been exposed to dust, debris, and trauma. To better understand the long-term impact of that exposure, the Registry was established in 2002 by the NYC Health Department and federal partners.

Today, the Registry is the largest post-disaster health registry in U.S. history. It tracks the health and well-being of more than 71,000 people affected by 9/11. What began as an emergency public health response evolved into a critical long-term research and outreach program.

In the past 25 years, the Registry has:

- Published more than 200 research papers on health impacts of 9/11, including respiratory illness, cancers, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Contributed to policies that have expanded access to monitoring and treatment through the Treatment Referral Program (TRP)
 - The TRP connects enrollees to the federal WTC Health Program for no-out-of-pocket specialized healthcare. The TRP has been the source of thousands of new applications to the WTC Health Program and serves as a model for how post-disaster registries can assist in long-term disaster response.
- Established the CLEAR Forum (in 2023), an ongoing council of other disaster registries and longitudinal cohort studies globally, to share best practices and lessons learned for establishing and operating such entities over the long term

The Registry continues to make sure the experiences of people affected by 9/11 are recognized, studied, and supported for generations to come.



From Trauma to Resilience: Understanding Post-Traumatic Growth

Many people affected by 9/11 experienced grief, health concerns, and emotional hardships in the years that followed. However, research conducted by the Registry also revealed another important part of their stories: resilience.

Recently, the Registry has explored the concept of post-traumatic growth, which means positive psychological changes that can occur in people after experiencing trauma. While the challenges faced by many enrollees remain very real, some reported finding new meaning and purpose in their lives after 9/11.

Registry research has shown that certain enrollees experienced stronger personal relationships, greater appreciation for life, increased community involvement, spiritual growth, or a deeper sense of inner strength. Others became advocates, volunteers, caregivers, or mentors, channeling their experiences into helping others facing trauma or illness.

Post-traumatic growth does not mean forgetting pain or “moving on.” Instead, it reflects the ways people adapt, rebuild, and continue forward despite loss and hardship. To read about the Registry’s latest research on post-traumatic growth, visit nyc.gov/911mentalhealth.



Image credit: Supachai Praneet / Shutterstock.com

Early Detection Saves Lives

Many health conditions linked to 9/11 exposure do not appear immediately. Some develop over time, making long-term health monitoring critical. Through the work of the Registry and WTC Health Program, thousands of survivors and responders have gained access to information, screenings, and specialized 9/11-related healthcare earlier than they otherwise would have.

Registry research has helped identify patterns in many 9/11-related conditions among people who were exposed to the disaster. These findings contributed to updated clinical guidelines to help healthcare providers recognize 9/11-related conditions in their patients.

The Registry has also created health handouts, educational materials, and outreach campaigns that encourage enrollees to seek regular healthcare, monitor for symptoms, and discuss their exposure with their providers. To find health handouts on topics such as systemic autoimmune diseases, memory loss, and lung diseases, visit nyc.gov/911health/materials.



Image credit: Anatolir / Shutterstock.com

The Stories Behind the Science

Behind every Registry research finding is a personal story. Over the years, enrollee interviews and testimonial videos have helped researchers better understand the lasting physical, emotional, and social effects of 9/11 exposure.

Enrollees have shared their experiences with respiratory illness, PTSD, chronic pain, cognitive aging concerns, and the everyday challenges of living with long-term health conditions. These voices help guide Registry research priorities and outreach efforts, making sure our studies reflect the real experiences of those affected by 9/11.

Your stories continue to give meaning and direction to the science. To hear Registry enrollees share their experiences with 9/11-related conditions and the Registry, visit nyc.gov/911testimonials.



The Lives of Children Exposed to 9/11

Thousands of children were exposed to 9/11 as students attending school or residents living near the WTC site. Many of these children experienced the same long-term effects as other survivors and rescue and recovery workers and were enrolled in the Registry by their parents. Our research has explored physical and mental health issues among children exposed to 9/11, such as asthma, respiratory symptoms, PTSD, and anxiety (including an increase in substance use and risky behaviors). As this population gets older, researchers are also examining issues related to their cognitive health, long-term stress responses, and overall well-being.



Awareness and support for adults affected by trauma as children have evolved significantly since 2001. Better recognition of mental health needs, expanded counseling resources, and long-term monitoring efforts have helped improve understanding of how disasters such as 9/11 impact young people over time. To watch videos of enrollees Lucie and Wen Gu talking about their experiences as children on 9/11, visit bit.ly/911-health-testimonials.

The Evolution of 9/11 Health Research

During the first few years after 9/11, researchers focused on understanding the immediate physical and emotional effects of the disaster. As the years passed, researchers have examined how health outcomes changed over time. Today, Registry research covers, respiratory illness, PTSD, cancer survivorship, cognitive aging, chronic pain, quality of life, and many other topics. The graphic below shows how our research has evolved over time and reflects the changing needs of people exposed to 9/11 and the value of long-term health monitoring in identifying emerging issues and improving care.

Early Research, 2002 to 2013

- Barriers to evacuation
- Birth outcomes
- Newly diagnosed asthma
- Rescue and recovery exposure
- Respiratory protective equipment
- Respiratory symptoms
- Sarcoidosis
- Skin rashes
- Unmet mental healthcare
- Upper and lower respiratory illness

Continuing Research, 2002 to Present

- Cancer
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Heart disease
- Lung function
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Quality of life

Emerging Research, 2013 to Present

- Binge drinking
- Chronic and acute pain
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Colon (colorectal) cancer screening
- COVID-19 illnesses and resilience
- Early work retirement
- Mild cognitive impairment
- Post-traumatic growth
- Smoking cessation
- Substance use

A New Moment of Remembrance

On the 25th anniversary of 9/11, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum will add a seventh moment of silence, followed by a bell toll, to honor those who have died from 9/11-related illnesses. Traditionally, six moments of silence have marked the disaster and the collapse of the Twin Towers.

The new tribute recognizes the lasting health impacts of 9/11 and honors the more than 9,000 people who have died from illnesses linked to exposure. It serves as a powerful reminder that, for many survivors and responders, the consequences of 9/11 continue today.



Image credit: lev radin / Shutterstock.com

Reflection

Janna Metzler, the Registry's director of research, recently visited the 9/11 Memorial & Museum. Here she is seen in the reflection of an installation that acknowledges the volunteers and other workers who participated in 9/11 relief, including Robert Brackbill, a senior scientist for the Registry.

For more information about the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, visit 911memorial.org.

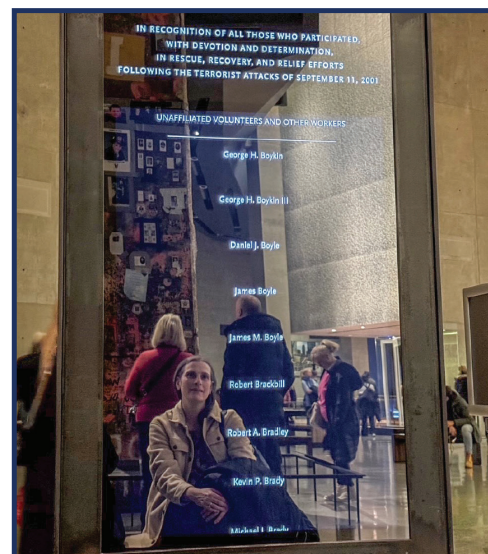


Photo by Ashley Geczik

Mission Statement

With ongoing support from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Registry continues its mission to:

- Identify and track the long-term physical and mental health effects of 9/11 and gaps in care for 9/11-related health conditions
 - Share findings and recommendations with enrollees, the public, the WTC Health Program, and policymakers
 - Respond to enrollees' health concerns and refer enrollees to the WTC Health Program
 - Offer guidance to public health professionals on planning for future emergencies
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To find this e-newsletter in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, and Traditional Chinese, visit nyc.gov/911health/newsletter. To contact the Registry, email wtchr@health.nyc.gov or call 866-692-9827.



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