

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2007

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, and
Education
2358 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James T. Walsh
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor
Health and Human Services, and
Education
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Walsh:

As you consider the Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations Bill for the Department of Health and Human Services, we urge you to recommend at least \$282,997,330 for the World Trade Center Monitoring and Treatment Program administered by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which provides comprehensive medical services for illnesses that resulted from WTC exposures in the responder population.

When terrorists attacked the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, first responders and volunteers came from all around the country to aid in the enormous rescue and recovery efforts. These workers were exposed to a toxic mélange of poisonous substances, and are now suffering from serious illnesses as a result of their heroism. The World Trade Center Monitoring and Treatment Program provides monitoring and treatment for responders who have become sick, but the programs associated with it require significantly more funding to meet the needs of the thousands of other workers and residents who need treatment.

A NIOSH estimate from January of this year suggests that the total annual cost for the current program will total \$282,997,330. This amount will only increase as more information becomes available about related illnesses and more people begin to suffer from late-onset diseases. This amount will only increase as new information becomes available about related illnesses and more people begin to suffer from late-onset diseases. A recent New York City report estimates that that the most-heavily affected population is due to increase to 410,000.

While we are pleased that President Bush has committed to a \$25 million "placeholder" in his federal budget, this amount is a far cry from what is truly needed to adequately meet the current need. Furthermore, testimony at a recent hearing by the Administration's top 9/11 health official, Dr. John Agwunobi, left observers extremely concerned that Administration had made little progress in the development of a comprehensive approach to 9/11 health that would include residents, non-first responder workers, and school children.

In order to provide monitoring and treatment for people with 9/11-related illnesses, we urge you to recommend at least \$282,997,330 for the World Trade Center Monitoring and Treatment Program administered by NIOSH in the FY08 Labor, HHS and Education Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

Jerrold Bradler

Ray Korman

Aydie M. Webb

Mike Ruskay

John

Carol McCord

Eric L. Engel

Gregg

Yvette D. Clarke

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Art Lowy

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Louise M. Slaughter

M. B. ...
S. V. C.

J. H. Hall

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D. H. ...

Members of Congress who signed the letter:

1. Rep. Jerrold Nadler
2. Rep. Gary L. Ackerman
3. Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez
4. Rep. Michael R. McNulty
5. Rep. Edolphus Towns
6. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy
7. Rep. Eliot L. Engel
8. Rep. Gregory W. Meeks
9. Rep. Yvette D. Clarke
10. Rep. Joseph Crowley
11. Rep. Nita M. Lowey
12. Rep. Anthony D. Weiner
13. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri
14. Rep. Kristen E. Gillibrand
15. Rep. Charles B. Rangel
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20. Rep. Timothy H. Bishop
21. Rep. John J. Hall
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23. Rep. Brian Higgins