

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 6, 2005

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

A newly released Government Accountability Office (GAO) report (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d051020t.pdf>) found that a program set up by your department for federal employees who assisted in 9/11 recovery efforts completed screenings of fewer than 400 of the thousands of federal responders – in GAO’s words, it “accomplished little” (Page 20). This program, which was intended to identify sick and injured federal responders, was ended essentially because it was actually identifying ill responders but did not know what to do with them. According to the report, “officials told us they were concerned about continuing to provide screening examinations without the ability to provide participants with additional needed services” (Page 16).

We are disturbed that this program was allowed to wither away without accomplishing its mission. The federal employees who responded to the attacks of 9/11 selflessly gave of themselves in our nation’s time of need, but the federal government simply has not supported them in *their* time of need. We believe that if these heroes of 9/11 do not get adequate medical monitoring, it will constitute a failure of the federal government.

Since it is clear that the monitoring program mentioned above has not met its goals, we trust that you will work to find a way to take care of the medical monitoring needs of these federal responders. To that end, we request that you, for the first time, authorize the World Trade Center (WTC) Medical Monitoring Program, a successful, federally-funded model program, to conduct medical health screening and monitoring of these federal responders. In addition, we request that you authorize that program to conduct screenings for lower Manhattan residents and affected office re-occupant employees, who are also without a place to turn for medical monitoring.

The WTC Medical Monitoring Program was originally established by a FEMA grant and has screened over 14,000 individuals; however, it is currently not permitted by your department to screen any federal employee or Lower Manhattan resident. Why recreate the wheel when there is an existing program that can handle the load immediately and effectively? We request that you not only allow the WTC Medical Monitoring Program to screen the federal responders and residents, but that you also provide it with the necessary additional resources.

Federal responders helped this nation in its time of need; it is past time that the federal government help them. What better program than the successful WTC Medical Monitoring Program to take the lead? We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Carolyn B. Maloney*  
CAROLYN B. MALONEY  
Member of Congress

*Jerrold Nadler*  
JERROLD NADLER  
Member of Congress

*Tim H. Bishop*  
TIMOTHY H. BISHOP  
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