

Statement from the WTC Program Administrator John Howard, M.D., marking the three-year anniversary of the World Trade Center Health Program

Since the enactment of the Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act three years ago, the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program has been a leader in 9/11-related healthcare and research. The Program serves over 67,000 people, including nearly 4,000 new members this year (July 1, 2013-June 30, 2014). As we mark the third anniversary of the WTC Health Program on July 1, 2014, I'd like to acknowledge our members, reflect on our achievements, and thank the many organizations that ensure our collective success.

Increased Benefits

High quality member care is our most important priority. In the past year, the WTC Health Program approved over 8,000 new health condition certifications, including over 1,700 cancer certifications. Each certification represents a member who is now eligible to receive vital medical treatment. It also reminds us that thousands continue to confront 9/11-related health conditions over a decade after the disaster.

Medical monitoring remains a cornerstone of the WTC Health Program. The Program expanded this benefit to include cancer screening. Now members in recommended age brackets or who have a medical history suggestive of increased risk may receive colonoscopies and mammograms as part of their Program benefits.

In February 2014, I announced a rule adding four specific types of cancer to the List of WTC-Related Health Conditions. These four are: malignant neoplasms of the brain, cervix uteri (invasive cervical cancer), pancreas, and testis. This rule also revised the definition of rare cancers to include all cancers whose incidence rate is less than 15 cases per 100,000 in the U.S. population per year. For a list of rare cancers, you can check on line at http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/pdfs/WTCHP_PP_RareCancers05052014.pdf

The new rule also clarified the definition of childhood cancer to any cancer diagnosed in a person under the age of 20 years old. These changes followed an expansion of cancer coverage in October 2013, when malignant neoplasm of the prostate (prostate cancer) was added to the list of covered conditions.

Expanded Outreach

The WTC Health Program remains committed to timely and effective communication with our members. In the past year, we completed a major redesign of our website, issued new member ID cards for those with treatment benefits, and released an updated privacy statement. In the coming weeks, look for the publication of our member services handbook. The member handbook will provide detailed, user-friendly benefit information, and will be available on our website at www.cdc.gov/wtc/handbook.html. Printed copies will be available upon request.

The WTC Health Program also seeks to reach those who are eligible for care but are not yet enrolled. Our cooperative agreement partners have been active with community outreach and expanding the Program's presence on social media. To assist their efforts, the Program has created many new

education and outreach products in English, Spanish, Polish, and Chinese. Additionally we released 13 testimonial videos, where members powerfully share their experience of care in the WTC Health Program. Our new educational materials may be viewed at www.cdc.gov/wtc/outreach-materials.html.

Supporting Research

Through extramural research grants, the WTC Health Program studies the unique risks and medical needs of the 9/11 population. In fiscal year 2013, the Program awarded six new projects, bringing the total number to 24. Researchers are studying important concerns such as post-traumatic stress syndrome and asthma, and investigating potential emerging threats such as heart and autoimmune diseases. In February of 2014, the Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) released recommendations for future research priorities that are posted on our website at: www.cdc.gov/wtc/pdfs/RecommendationsforResearchfromSTAC.pdf. We look forward to growing the body of knowledge about 9/11 health effects in the coming year.

I'd like to thank all of the clinicians, researchers, and partners who work tirelessly for the needs of 9/11 responders and survivors. I congratulate you for another successful year and I look forward to your future contributions. If you have any questions about the WTC Health Program, please call us at 1-888-982-4748 or email us at WTC@cdc.gov.

Thank you,

John Howard, M.D.

Administrator, World Trade Center Health Program