

U.S. to Grant \$30 Million for Civilians' 9/11 Ailments

New York Times

July 24, 2008

By James Barron

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) is expected to announce on Thursday that it plans to award \$30 million to [hospitals](#) and clinics that monitor and treat residents, students and other so-called nonresponders who were exposed to dust and smoke at ground zero.

These nonresponders were not among the rescue and recovery workers sent to the World Trade Center site after the twin towers were destroyed on 9/11. Some of those workers have complained of respiratory and gastrointestinal ailments. Thousands of firefighters, for example, developed what has become known as the World Trade Center [cough](#).

Christine Branche, the acting director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, said in an interview on Wednesday that the money was set aside in an appropriations bill that Congress passed and President Bush signed in December. She said it would be given as grants in three installments of \$10 million, and would go to as many as three hospitals or clinics.

Those institutions will have to apply for the grants. Dr. Branche said she did not know how many might apply.

A spokesman for one place that has treated people exposed to the dust and smoke from the trade center site, the W.T.C. Environmental Health Center at Bellevue Hospital Center, said he had not heard about the grants until a reporter called. But he said he hoped there would be "funding for support services for area residents, cleanup workers and others served by our program."

Dr. Philip J. Landrigan, chairman of the department of community and [preventive medicine](#) at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, which runs a center that has examined more than 15,000 ground zero workers and volunteers, said the center would decide whether to apply once details about the grants were formally announced.

"This is a good thing," Dr. Landrigan said. "People who lived and worked in Lower Manhattan in the days and weeks after 9/11 were exposed to the dust, and many have never been properly treated."

Dr. Branche said she did not know how many people might receive treatment once the money had been distributed; she said the institutions receiving the money would decide that. The grants, she said, will be awarded by Sept. 30.

"We're on track for getting this money out," she said.

But some members of the New York Congressional delegation said the money was overdue. “I am pleased to see that they are finally releasing these funds, as Congress intended,” Senator [Hillary Rodham Clinton](#) said in a statement. “There is no excuse for not addressing the very real needs of residents, students and office workers experiencing adverse health impacts following the 9/11 attacks.”

Representative [Jerrold Nadler](#) said the grants were a positive development. “Congress specifically directed the C.D.C. to provide for the health of everyone whose health was undermined by the environmental impacts of 9/11,” he said. “The administration resolutely refused to do it. They’re now doing it. That’s good.”

Dr. Branche was named interim director this month after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention decided not to reappoint Dr. John Howard as director. Since 2006, he had coordinated health programs for workers at ground zero, and had sometimes been at odds with the Bush administration over monitoring and treatment arrangements.