

City Study Calls for More Funding for Sept. 11 Illnesses

Staten Island Advance
September 4, 2008
By: Peter Spencer

A new city-funded study on the health affects of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks calls for long-term funding for treatment and expanded research of various respiratory illnesses and post-traumatic stress disorder, and raises questions about the extent of these problems.

The 9/11 Annual Health Report was released today by the World Trade Center Medical Working Group, an expert panel created by Mayor Michael Bloomberg last June. The group - recommended as part of a 2007 study, "Addressing the Health Impacts of 9/11" - was charged with reviewing clinical and research findings on the potential health effects of WTC exposure.

The 28-page study details some of the most commonly found illnesses in tens of thousands of first-responders, workers and residents who lived near the World Trade Center, including asthma, lung disease, acid reflux, stress and depressions. It also highlights some of the limitations of WTC illness research. The panel questions the accuracy of current estimates about the number of people affected and the scope of the effects, and whether federal funding to continue such studies and treatment will be adequate.

"This review of research to date also makes clear that significant questions remain unanswered. For example, how extensively did the disaster affect the health of residents, area workers, and students in Lower Manhattan, and what kinds of exposures increased their risks? How persistent are the mental and physical health symptoms in thousands of rescue, recovery and clean-up workers? How effective has treatment been among the people who have received it?" the report says in its key findings.

Mayor Bloomberg plans to hold a press conference on the findings, and to discuss the city's progress on implementing measures to address Sept. 11 health issues.

The entire report can be found on the on the city's Web site.