



Department of Health

ANDREW M. CUOMO
Governor

HOWARD A. ZUCKER, M.D., J.D.
Commissioner

SALLY DRESLIN, M.S., R.N.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

September 11, 2019

TO: Health Care Providers, Hospitals, Off-Campus Emergency Departments, Substance Use Disorder/Mental Health Agencies, and Local Health Departments

FROM: New York State Department of Health

HEALTH INFORMATIONAL MESSAGE:

World Trade Center – Related Illnesses

For health care facilities and hospitals, please distribute to the Emergency Department, Director of Nursing, Medical Director, and Director of Psychiatry.

Summary

As we mark the eighteenth anniversary of September 11th today, the New York State Department of Health (the Department) would like to remind all clinicians about important resources available to patients who have World Trade Center (WTC) - related exposures and subsequent illnesses from either working or living near the site.

Background

It is evident that 9/11 continues to affect the health of responders and survivors. The 9/11 attacks exposed rescue and recovery workers as well as occupants of nearby buildings to clouds of debris, dust, smoke, and fumes, putting them at risk for serious health conditions, such as airway and digestive conditions, as well as more long-term health effects such as cancer. Health effects related to this exposure may vary depending on an individual's duration and intensity of exposure, underlying medical conditions, and individual susceptibilities. Additionally, first responders and nearby residents may have mental health or substance use disorder concerns that developed or were exacerbated by witnessing the horrific events of the disaster and the daily stress of the rescue and recovery efforts, which may be of continuing concern.

Recommendations

While today marks eighteen years after the event, providers should remain alert that patients they care for now may be suffering from WTC-related illnesses. The Department encourages all providers to know how to identify, evaluate, treat, and refer patients with conditions that could be associated with exposure to the disaster. If you suspect your patient may have a WTC-related health condition, it is



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important that they are referred to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's World Trade Center Health Program.

The [WTC Health Program](#), which was established as a result of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, offers services at no cost to WTC workers, responders and survivors to help with medical and mental health conditions related to certified WTC-related health conditions. Specifically, the program provides medical monitoring and treatment for emergency responders, recovery and cleanup workers, and volunteers who helped after the terrorist attacks on September 11. The WTC Health Program also provides health evaluations and treatment for eligible people who were present in the dust or dust cloud on 9/11 or who worked, resided, or attended school, childcare, or adult daycare in the New York City disaster area for a period of time on 9/11 and/or during the following months.

Additional Resources

CME/CE activities are available to clinicians through the [WTC Health Program](#) and provide guidance about screening and treating patients who may have been exposed to these sites and additional details about the WTC Health Program. Additionally, the health care community plays an important role in assisting these individuals, when possible, with accessing compensation programs through the [Victim Compensation Fund](#) and [New York State Workers' Compensation](#).