



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GILLIBRAND URGES FEDS TO SPEED UP RESEARCH LINKING CANCER TO 9/11 TOXINS, MAKE DECISION TO ADD CANCER TO LIST OF 9/11 ILLNESSES

Gillibrand: "For Many 9/11 Responders, This Decision Is A Matter of Life and Death"
Washington, DC – After a report released today by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) noted insufficient data linking cancer to toxins at Ground Zero, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) urged the Director of NIOSH, Dr. John Howard, to speed up research and data collection examining ties between cancers and Ground Zero toxins so that an expedited decision can be made on adding the disease to the list of 9/11 health-related illnesses. With growing rates of respiratory and digestive cancers among first responders and community residents, and deadly cancers taking the lives of 9/11 heroes, Senator Gillibrand pointed out the urgency to act soon.

Senator Gillibrand wrote in a letter to Dr. Howard, "I commend your quick action to study and release a report on the currently available research regarding cancer in the responder and community populations. However, I am troubled that you do not plan to do another review until 'early to mid-2012.' I would specifically request that as new peer-reviewed data emerges, that you reassess your cancer determination each and every time based on the new data. Responders and their families continue to suffer physically and financially from these deadly cancers, and the longer they have to wait on a cancer determination, the longer our 9/11 heroes will continue to suffer without proper treatment or compensation. For many responders, this is a matter of life and death and I urge you to do everything possible to speed up this process.

NIOSH, the federal agency responsible for implementing the 9/11 health bill, released a report today which explained that they cannot, using existing data, make a definitive determination that the toxins released at the World Trade Center caused cancer.

The 9/11 health bill signed into law requires a review of scientific information and medical records to determine whether or not cancer should be covered under the program. Currently, cancer is not included in the list of health conditions related to 9/11.

Full text of Senator Gillibrand's letter is below:

Dear Dr. Howard,
I appreciate your work and the considerations you have made to implement the 9/11 health program as fairly and as quickly as possible. I commend your quick action to study and release a report on the currently available research regarding cancer in the responder and community populations. However, I am troubled that you do not plan to do another review until "early to mid-2012". I would specifically request that as new peer-reviewed data emerges, that you reassess your cancer determination each and every time based on the new data. Responders and

their families continue to suffer physically and financially from these deadly cancers, and the longer they have to wait on a cancer determination, the longer our 9/11 heroes will continue to suffer without proper treatment or compensation. For many responders, this is a matter of life and death and I urge you to do everything possible to speed up this process.

As you know, many of the responders that are now sick spent weeks at Ground Zero exposed to toxins without going home. They ate food covered in dust and slept in short spurts on the dust-covered ground before waking up to continue to dig through the rubble to recover victims of the tragedy. The rates of respiratory and digestive cancers among these heroes appears significantly higher than the general population and we cannot wait until even more have died before finally making the connection.

Of the police officers that have died from 9/11 related diseases, the average age was 46 years old. The responders that have died were healthy, strong men in the prime of their lives, like NYPD Officer Robert Helmke, who was 43 when he passed away on July 28, 2007 from Stage IV metastatic colorectal cancer, leaving behind his wife, Greta, and their two children, Garrett and Amelia, or FDNY Firefighter John McNamara, who was also 43 years old when he lost his life to colon cancer on August 9, 2009, leaving behind his wife, Jennifer, and their son, Jack. Both of these men spent hours working tirelessly on the pile, doing what they thought was right in the horrific aftermath, and were taken far too soon from their families by the toxins at Ground Zero. It is for the families of Robert and John, and so many like them, who continue to suffer as a result of their work following the attacks of 9/11, that I urge you to do everything possible to quickly evaluate any newly available research. Again, I thank you for your dedication in implementation of the 9/11 health program and I look forward to working with you in the future.

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