

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 27, 2007

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We write regarding the response dated April 5, 2007 from Assistant Secretary Agwunobi to our letter of March 6, 2007 regarding the federal government's response to the health impacts of 9/11. We find his letter unresponsive to our request of March 6.

As our letter says, we had been told that the President's proposal of \$25 million in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget was a "placeholder" or "starting point" and that by the end of February, 2007 the WTC Task Force would finalize its plan for how much additional funding would be needed to respond to the health issues surrounding 9/11.

While we were pleased to hear that on April 3, 2007 the 9/11 Health Task Force chaired by Dr. Agwunobi presented their recommendations to you, we expected that by this point the Administration would actually be sharing a plan with Congress and requesting the funds needed to provide medical monitoring for all exposed and treatment for those who are sick from the toxins at Ground Zero.

The Assistant Secretary's response does not adequately address the questions posed in our March 6, 2007 letter. Given this situation, we ask you to meet with us as soon as possible to answer the following questions:

- 1) Does the Administration intend to develop a comprehensive plan to medically monitor those exposed to the toxins of Ground Zero and treat those who became sick as a result? If not, why not?
- 2) If the Administration intends to develop such a plan, when will Congress and the public be provided with it?
- 3) The President proposed a "placeholder" of \$25 million in his Fiscal Year 2008 budget for the current program, with the understanding that the Administration would develop a plan on how much additional funding would be needed. When will this Congress be provided with this estimate?

4) Does the Administration intend to expand the current federally funded programs of medical monitoring and treatment for responders to residents, office workers and federal employees? If not, why not?

5) Does the Administration plan to continue funding the Centers of Excellence, or is it considering an alternative funding structure to address the 9-11 health crisis? If an alternate structure is being considered, please explain the reasoning for not continuing to provide funding to these important programs that are supported by the affected communities.

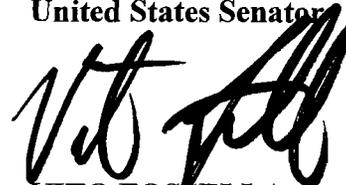
As you know, the appropriations process for Fiscal Year 2008 is well underway. In order to ensure that HHS has the funding it needs to provide appropriate and long term support to those affected by World Trade Center exposures, we ask that you schedule a meeting with us as soon as possible to answer these questions. Please contact Benjamin Chevat of Rep. Maloney's office at 202-225-7944 to schedule this meeting.

Sincerely,


CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator


HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON
United States Senator


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


VITO FOSSELLA
Member of Congress


JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress


EDOLPHUS TOWNS
Member of Congress


CHRISTOPHER SHAYS
Member of Congress