

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 29, 2012

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

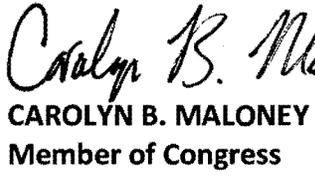
Thank you for all the efforts at the Department to quickly establish the World Trade Center Health Program and for quickly appointing members to the Science/Technical Advisory Committee. It is a testament to your and the Department's commitment to caring for 9/11 responders and survivors that there were no lapses in medical care while the program was being implemented. Yesterday the Science/Technical Advisory Committee voted to add certain cancers to the list of covered conditions for the program. As Members of Congress who represent individuals who are sick from exposure to toxins at ground zero, we know about many of these individuals who have developed cancer. Now the Committee has reported on the science supporting the link between Ground Zero exposures and the development of cancer among these individuals.

Last September we sent a letter to Program Administrator, Dr. John Howard, requesting that he conduct an immediate review of medical evidence and consider adding cancer for the health program. This request was based on new evidence that showed an increased rate of cancers among firefighters present at ground zero. As outlined in the law, Dr. Howard convened the STAC to evaluate scientific reports and to consider whether to add cancer, or certain types of cancer, to the list of covered conditions. The evaluation culminated in yesterday's findings that carcinogenic exposures related to ground zero are likely to increase the probability of developing certain types of cancers. This is solid progress for all those sick and struggling with care.

With yesterday's recommendation in mind, we write to request a meeting with you to discuss next steps. The Zadroga Act provides that Dr. Howard must determine what to do with this recommendation within 60 days. Could we arrange a meeting with you and Dr. Howard to discuss how the process will be going forward? The final determination as to whether to add certain cancers also will have a large impact on the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund as Special Master Sheila Birnbaum has said the list of presumptively covered conditions for the VCF could be modified based on the determinations of the WTC Health Program. Given the broad impact this will have on the 9/11 responder and survivor communities, we hope you will be able to accommodate our request.

Thank you for your consideration. We truly appreciate all your hard work in setting up a strong, accountable health program.

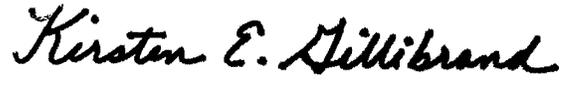
Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


JERROLD NADLER
Member of Congress


PETER T. KING
Member of Congress


CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator


KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND
United States Senator