



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

March 12, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President: ✓

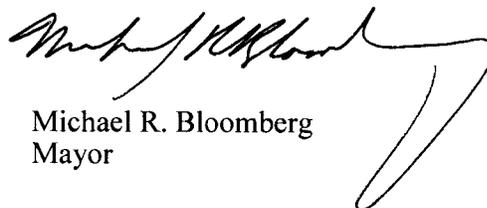
I write to urge you to reappoint Dr. John Howard as the World Trade Center Programs Coordinator at the Department of Health and Human Services. Until his appointment was allowed to expire last fall, Dr. Howard had carried out the duties of this specially-created position with unparalleled skill and dedication. As a result of his efforts, the country now has three centers of excellence dedicated to treating, monitoring, and understanding the health impacts of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Dr. Howard should be re-appointed as soon as possible to continue his important work, which I hope will soon include implementation of proposed federal legislation to establish a permanent WTC health program. With your support, I am optimistic that Congress could present a bill for your signature before the end of this year.

As you know, many thousands of people who responded to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, and many community members, local-area workers, and others in the vicinity of the attacks are now suffering from physical or mental illness as a result. September 11th was an attack on America, and I have long-advocated for sustained federal funding for the WTC health programs that are treating and monitoring those who are sick, or could become sick. Until that is achieved, Congress has been making yearly appropriations for the treatment and monitoring of responders and community members affected by the attacks. Under the leadership of Dr. Howard at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the victims of 9/11 have received treatment and monitoring at three centers of excellence—the FDNY WTC Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program, the WTC Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program at the Mount Sinai Consortium, and the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation’s WTC Environmental Health Center.

Dr. Howard has also supported critical 9/11 research, including funding for the WTC Health Registry, a database of more than 71,000 people who were among the most-heavily exposed to the attacks. The Registry is the largest effort of its kind; the research it enables, along with studies undertaken through the centers of excellence, must be sustained and expanded to truly understand the health impacts of this national tragedy. Dr. Howard’s experience with, and support for, these efforts uniquely position him to ensure that federal funds committed to address the health impacts of 9/11 go only where they are most needed, based on the latest scientific research.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

MRB:bg