



The City of New York

# **Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Julie Menin** CHAIRPERSON | **Noah Pfefferblit** DISTRICT MANAGER

**The Council of the City of New York**  
**Committees on Civil Service & Labor, Lower Manhattan Redevelopment, and Mental Health, Mental Retardation, Alcoholism, Drug Abuse & Disability Services**  
**Oversight Hearing on**  
**Examining the NYC World Trade Center Medical Working Group**  
**2010 Annual Report on 9/11 Health**

**Testimony by Catherine McVay Hughes, Vice Chairperson**  
**Manhattan Community Board 1**

**Monday, February 14, 2011 at 1 p.m.**  
**14<sup>th</sup> Floor Committee Room, 250 Broadway, New York, NY**

Good afternoon. I am Catherine McVay Hughes, the Vice Chairperson of Community Board One (CB1). Thank you, Chairpersons Margaret S. Chin, James Sanders, Jr. and Oliver Koppell, for the opportunity to testify today on the city's World Trade Center Medical Working Group 2010 Annual Report on 9/11 Health.

As you well know, the World Trade Center (WTC) lies at the heart of Manhattan Community Board One (CB1) – and many of us who still live or work in the area were here when the towers were attacked. Some of us volunteered as first responders along with people from outside our district, and many of us lived and worked downtown through the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The 2010 annual report highlights several key issues related to 9/11-related exposures, but the biggest issue has always been what information is gathered and how it is shared and utilized. The time lag in government compilation and dissemination of the information, lack of collaboration and communication with the survivor community, and the accuracy of the guidelines are three main areas that need to be addressed.

The annual report touches upon preliminary cancer investigations associated with 9/11-related exposures among two overlapping study cohorts: the Fire Department of New York (FDNY) and the WTC Health Registry. Although the WTC Health Registry does match the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Cancer Registry, the most recent data available on the NYSDOH website for new cancers and deaths is through 2007. NYSDOH needs to compile and disseminate this information in a much timelier manner. At this time, the 9/11 Health & Compensation Act does not include any cancer in its list of "WTC-Related Health Conditions Defined" diseases. A three year time lag in information relating to cancer is not acceptable. We urge you to push for a decrease in the multiyear time lag between the identification and reporting of cancer.

The report also discussed an August 2010 meeting on "mortality among people who were exposed to the WTC disaster." The report states that, "this discussion, which took place after

this report went to press, will be summarized in the 2011 MWG annual report,” but I am not aware of any invitation being extended to the survivor community to participate in this discussion. We request that if there is relevant information, including to the survivor community, that this information be shared now rather than waiting till the ten year anniversary of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks so that relevant information can be considered as part of the implementation of the 9/11 Health & Compensation Act.

As more research about the health impacts of the terrorist attacks is conducted, both the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Clinical Guidelines for Adults and Children & Adolescents Exposed to the World Trade Center Disaster will need to be updated. The latest Guidelines for Adults are dated June 2008 [Vol. 27(6): 41-54] and state that they are valid until June 30, 2009. The Guidelines for Children and Adolescents were published in July 2009 and are valid until July 31, 2012.

Under the 9/11 Health & Compensation Act, a WTC Medical Program Administrator will be appointed to run the WTC Health Program to be established within the Department of Health and Human Services beginning on July 1, 2011. I believe that the appointment of Dr. John Howard would ensure continuity of leadership in this important phase. Dr. Howard is currently the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Coordinator of the World Trade Center Health Programs (appointed in 2001 as the first federal WTC Health Coordinator). The WTC Environmental Health Center (EHC) Community Advisory Committee strongly supported his appointment in their January 31, 2011 letter. As you know, the WTC EHC is the Center for Excellence that addresses the medical needs for the survivor community.

To ensure that there is no funding gap in the availability of services related to the WTC disaster and the implementation of the James Zadroga 9/11 Health & Compensation Act, it is important that the city continue to fund the WTC Environmental Health Centers through that transition.

CB1 has strongly supported the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act for many years, and we were very glad when the bill finally passed at the very end of the federal legislative session. We would like to thank all of the many elected officials, especially our New York delegation, and the many groups that rallied together to demand that the entire Community made ill by the 9/11 attacks – responders and survivors alike – receive the health care they need and deserve. To this end, please find attached the CB1 resolution passed unanimously at our January 2011 meeting.

We cannot overstate the tremendous importance the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act has for our downtown community, for those who survived the attacks, for those who returned to work, live, or attend school here afterwards, and for all of those who stepped forward in our darkest hour and assisted in the recovery and rebuilding of Lower Manhattan. Unfortunately, the WTC Health Program that begins on July 1, 2011 only covers a five year period. It is essential that we begin planning our efforts to pass an extension of the 9/11 Health and Compensation Act now.

Thank you.