

Remarks to STAC by 911 Health Watch Executive Director 2/9/2023

Thank you.

My name is Benjamin Chevat, I am Executive Director of 911 Health Watch, Inc., a 501 C3 not-for-profit created by the New York State AFL CIO and its affiliated unions.

Our organization is dedicated to making sure that the goal of providing quality medical care and compensation for injured and ill 9/11 responders and Survivors – embodied in the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010 and its reauthorization in 2015 and 2019 – is met.

Thank you for this opportunity to give public comment on the WTC Health Program’s proposed revised *Policy and Procedures for Adding Non-Cancer Health Conditions to the List of WTC-Related Health Conditions (Non-Cancer P&P)*.

As the charge from the Program Administrator outlines:

“expanding research agenda has resulted in significant gains in the available scientific information and epidemiologic studies of 9/11-exposed populations and, as a result, a more rigorous description of the evidence supporting causal inference is needed in the *Non- Cancer P&P*.”

9/11 Health Watch agrees with the Director that, given the increased research and more information that is available, there is a need to bring the non-cancer policies in line with the cancer Policy and Procedures—and it appears that these proposed changes would go a long way to achieve that goal, pending the discussion and issues raised today by the STAC.

On the issue of the Program’s research activities, with Congress’s recent action as part of the last year’s Omnibus Spending bill that authorized the creation of a new, badly needed research cohort to better understand the impact of the toxins and the attacks on impacted populations, especially those that were children at the time, we would take this opportunity urge the Administrator to have the Science and Technical Advisory Committee at some point review and discuss the program’s plans before they are implemented.

This new research cohort, that Senator’s Gillibrand and Schumer managed to get Congress to authorize, along with badly need additional funding for the World

Trade Center Health Program, will really help fill a huge gap in the Program's research capabilities and will get us better knowledge and insight into the impact of World Trade Center toxins that we don't currently have.

This new cohort will allow for expansion of what is available from current cohorts to provide appropriate power and sampling for future studies that may require larger cohorts, as well as potential for replication studies. These areas of investigation would include those of non-cancer issues—such as reproductive health, and cognitive and behavioral issues—as well as cancers.

We look forward to the program developing this new study tool as soon as possible and we need to make sure that this new cohort is designed to allow this vital research to be done.

Thank you.