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GAO: NIOSH's 9/11-Health Cost Estimates "Improved" Since Last Year

*-NIOSH Says that 9/11 Health Progs. Will Cost \$218.5
Million in FY 2008,*

But Admin. Provides Only \$25 Million in Budget-

Washington, D.C. - Today, Senators Charles Schumer, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez and Reps. Carolyn B. Maloney, Jerrold Nadler, and Vito Fossella released a new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report concluding that the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) had improved the cost estimation process for World Trade Center health programs over the last year. NIOSH estimates that the total cost for 9/11-related health care and medical monitoring programs in FY 2008 will be \$218.5 million, compared with the agency's cost estimate for FY 2007 of \$230 to \$283 million. The GAO report ([click here for a full copy](#)) says that NIOSH's cost estimates for this fiscal year are improved because they are based in large part on the average actual costs of screening and monitoring exams conducted in FY 2007.

The Senators and Representatives issued the following joint statement on the report:

"NIOSH appears to have solid cost estimates for 9/11 health care, but the Administration is still falling far short when it comes to delivering care to everyone exposed to Ground Zero toxins, in New York, New Jersey, and nationwide. We learned last month that the President is proposing only \$25 million for 9/11 health programs this year. It's time for the Administration to finally take the steps necessary to provide treatment and monitoring to everyone whose health was compromised by the 9/11 attacks."

Background

President Bush's budget proposal for this year (FY 2009) includes a 77% funding cut for 9/11 health care programs, from \$108 million appropriated for FY '08 to \$25 million for FY '09. On January 23rd, NY and NJ delegation members sent [a letter to President Bush](#) asking him to ensure that 9/11 health clinics, with programs that are estimated to cost more than \$200 million this year alone, are fully funded in his FY '09 budget. On January 27th, a White House spokesman told the AP that the president's budget "will reflect his continued commitment to World Trade Center workers."

The president's budget last year (FY 2008) had also included only \$25 million for 9/11 health programs --even though the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimated that the programs would need more than \$200 million to cover their operating costs for that year, as well. At the time the President's FY '08 budget was released, the Office of Management and Budget told Members of Congress that, if needed, additional 9/11 health funding would be added to the FY '08 budget. However, the President made no further funding requests that year.

Members of Congress from New York and New Jersey fought to exceed the president's FY '08 request and [ultimately delivered \\$108 million](#) in the regular federal budget for sick and injured 9/11 responders and area residents, workers and students, plus [another \\$50 million for 9/11 health](#) in an emergency spending bill, for a total of \$158 million.

Weeks before Christmas, [the administration suddenly announced that it had abandoned plans to create the World Trade Center Business Processing Center](#), the first federally-funded national program to provide treatment for sick 9/11 responders and others who reside outside the New York metropolitan area. At the time, the administration claimed that the proposed Business Processing Center wasn't properly funded, but within days of the administration's announcement, Congress appropriated another \$108 million for 9/11 health care.

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