

# HEALTH WATCH

Clinical Center at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

## World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program in New Jersey

**T**he WTC Monitoring and Treatment Program has provided services to over 900 participants and continues to grow. Our treatment program includes expert consultation and prescription benefits to all workers regardless of insurance status. X-rays and CT scans as needed are offered at convenient locations in New Jersey and New York. Mental health services are offered at our Piscataway office and three additional locations convenient to workers residing in New Jersey, Staten Island, and close counties in Pennsylvania.

### New additions to our program

Dr. Barbara Marroccoli, an experienced internist and occupational physician has joined our treatment and monitoring program. She was previously Director of The Occupational Corporate Health Program at The University Medical Center at Princeton, and is currently an Associate Professor of Medicine at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

Ms. Sara Hopkins, LCSW, has also joined our program. She is an experienced social worker, who has extensive experience in stress counseling as well as benefits assistance.

### Featured services

- 1 Ear, nose, and throat (ENT) consultation and/or treatment
- 2 Pulmonary consultation and treatment
- 3 Pulmonary function testing
- 4 Methacholine challenge testing
- 5 Gastroenterology consultation and treatment
- 6 Occupational Medicine evaluation and treatment
- 7 Mental Health evaluation and treatment including psychiatry.
- 8 CT scan and other diagnostic testing as recommended by specialists
- 9 WTC Related prescription medications which can be filled at CVS pharmacies in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

### Benefits assistance

The following benefits are offered either on-site or through telephone contact with social workers, occupational health nurses, and registered nurses trained in case management and benefits counseling:

1. Workers' compensation assistance for New York and New Jersey claims. This may include periodic evaluations, assistance with claims forms, WTC 12 registration, review of records, referrals to specialists, and correspondence with workers compensation attorneys.
2. Benefits assistance including access to social service agencies and utilization of insurance benefits.
3. Advocacy services for complex legal and medical issues.

# Interview with responder

**JOHN GAROFALO** is a retired NYC police officer who was stationed in lower Manhattan. He arrived at Ground Zero 20 minutes after the towers fell. He spent 53 days at Ground Zero, working 10-14 hour days with no days off. John was also present during the 1993 attack on the World Trade Center.

## What are your first memories of the WTC disaster?

When I first arrived, I was fully enveloped in a cloud of dust and smoke. I was there only 20 minutes when my nose started to bleed. I wear contact lens and as soon as I came in contact with the dust, my eyes felt like I had sand thrown into them. We started to form a bucket brigade, moving piece by piece of debris, and what we found was unbelievable.

Even if you are not sick, you should not wait because we don't know the long term effects on our health.

## When did you first notice long term health effects?

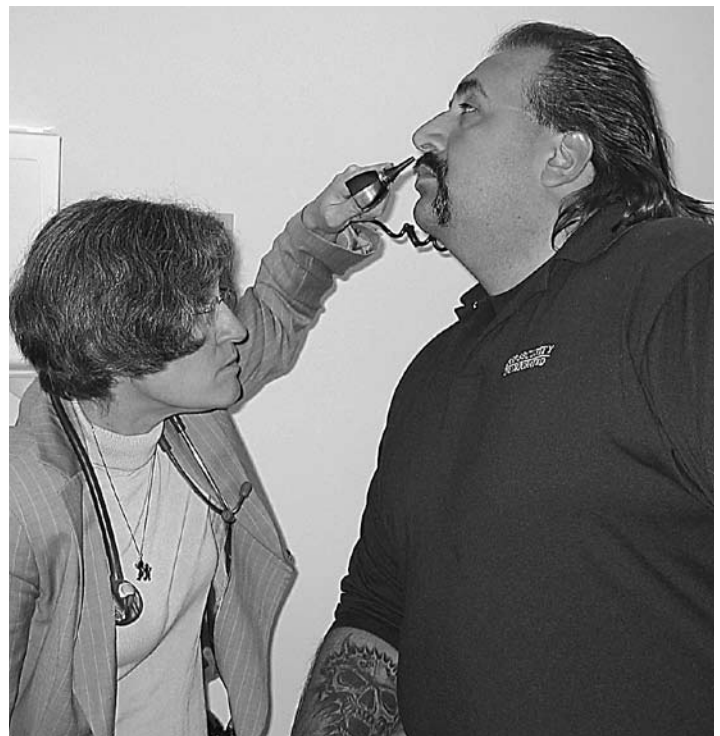
About ten months after leaving Ground Zero, I started getting numerous colds and sore throats. At the time, I thought this was normal. Then I started to get sinus infections and I felt like I was always taking antibiotics. I used to run and do weight training, but I noticed that my endurance was not what it was and I was always short of breath. Finally my fiancée pushed me to get checked, and I went to the WTC Medical Monitoring Program. I was diagnosed with diseased sinuses, gastroesophageal reflux, and sleep apnea. I was referred for sinus surgery which has improved many of my symptoms.

## Why I recommend the program to other responders?

I will remain in this program for years to come, and I suggest that anyone who was at Ground Zero on that unbelievable day, and the days and months that followed to go and get checked out and be guided by what the professionals say. Even if you are not sick, you should not wait because we don't know the long term effects on our health.



Carol Perret RN, Iris Udasin, M.D. and the WTC responder, Anthony Terranova, an iron worker.



Iris Udasin, MD and WTC responder, John Garofalo, retired police officer.