



THE WTC RESPONDER

HEALTH WATCH

Spring 2009

The Queens Clinical Center, City University of New York

Frequently Asked Questions

SOME QUESTIONS OUR PATIENTS HAVE BEEN ASKING

The staff of the Queens Clinical Center understands that you may have questions regarding your participation in The World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program. We wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with answers to some of our most frequently asked questions.

How is the Queens Clinical Center different from Mount Sinai?

The World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program is comprised of 5 clinical centers throughout the NY/ NJ area. Each clinical center is staffed by healthcare providers with expertise in the fields of occupational and environmental medicine. The clinical centers are coordinated by Mount Sinai and that is why you need to enroll in the program through the Mount Sinai Phone Bank at 888-702-0630. The 5 clinics differ only in location and patient volume. **You will receive the same monitoring exam and treatment services at our Queens Clinical Center as you would receive at Mount Sinai or any program site.**

The Queens Clinical Center is located at 163-03 Horace Harding Expressway in Flushing. Our clinic is on the third floor of a medical arts building on the corner of 164th Street and the westbound side of the Horace Harding Expressway. If you think that our location would be most convenient for your friends or co-workers who are eligible for the program, we encourage you to let them know about us.

How do I contact the Queens Clinical Center?

The main phone line for the Queens Clinical Center is 718-670-4174. You may see 718-670-4100 show up on your caller ID. This is a generic number for the Center and is not the number to call back if you need to reach us.

To schedule your annual monitoring exam or to schedule an appointment with your WTC treatment doctor, please call 718-670-4174.

If I have a WTC-related health condition, who pays for my care?

Once you have entered the Treatment Program at the Queens Clinical Center, all expenses related to treatment

of your WTC-related illnesses that are on the authorized WTC program list are free and confidential. This includes: examinations, diagnostic services, procedures, hospitalizations, psychotherapy and prescriptions.

I need to speak to someone about my WTC-related health symptoms, who should I ask for?

If you are experiencing any physical or mental health symptoms that are related to your work at the WTC site, please call 718-670-4174 to schedule an appointment to be evaluated for treatment by our healthcare team.

If you are being treated in our clinic and have any questions or concerns regarding your WTC-related **physical health care**, you should call our nurse case manager, Nellie Berlicchi, at 718-670-4175.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your **psychological health**, please call, our social work director, Irene Rosenthal, at 718-670-4177.

Where do I fill the prescriptions for my WTC-related illness?

All prescriptions written or authorized by your Queens Clinical Center physician can be filled at any CVS pharmacy in Queens or Brooklyn. In some instances a CVS pharmacist will not be familiar with our program, and they can call our administrator, Lauri Boni at 718-670-4191 for assistance.

Can I fill my prescriptions using my WTC card?

You can only receive prescription coverage if your WTC physician from the Queens Clinical Center has written or authorized your medications. The medications that are allowed under the program are restricted to those that have been identified for treatment of WTC-related illness.

How often should I return to the Queens Clinical Center?

Everyone needs to have the full monitoring exam once a year. We will call you to schedule your annual appointment. If you think that it has been over a year since your last exam, please call 718-670-4174 to schedule your monitoring exam.

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For more information or to make an appointment, call us at 718-670-4174

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I'm receiving treatment for my WTC-related health conditions, why do I need to have a long monitoring exam?

The long-term effects of your WTC exposures are still unknown. Even though you are being treated for current WTC-related conditions, the annual monitoring exam provides you and us with a comprehensive understanding of your health.

Why does it matter if I miss appointments?

We know that it may be difficult to make your appointments for monitoring or treatment with our program. However, it is important that you call in advance to cancel or reschedule. We want to provide care for the entire population of first responders and volunteers. If you don't show up for a scheduled appointment, that space remains empty. If you call in advance to cancel, we can fill your space with a brother or sister responder/volunteer who needs care. Please call 718-670-4174 to change your appointment.

Who should I speak with if I have a question regarding Workers' Compensation or Line of Duty Insurance (LODI)?

We know that the Workers' Compensation and LODI systems are difficult to navigate alone. Although we provide benefits counseling at each annual monitoring exam, you may also schedule an additional appointment to discuss your needs or concerns. Please call Irene Rosenthal of our Center at 718-670-4177.

Why should I fill out the WTC-12 form if I have no symptoms?

The long-term effects of WTC exposures are not determined at this time. There is a possibility that responders and volunteers could experience WTC-related symptoms down the road. Even if you aren't experiencing any symptoms from your WTC exposures now, the WTC-12 form is the only way to protect your right to benefits in the future. The deadline is September 11, 2010 and the form can be found at <http://www.wtc12.org/WTC-12.pdf>. If you have any questions, please call Irene Rosenthal of our Center at 718-670-4177.

Why should I file a Workers' Compensation or LODI claim when I already receive treatment through the Queens Clinical Center?

If you have been diagnosed with a WTC related illness as a result of your work, you are eligible to file a claim with Workers' Compensation or LODI. Most of the WTC-related illnesses are chronic in nature and require ongoing care. If Federal support for this program ends, you will be able to continue to receive medical care through the NY State Board but only after a successful claim has been registered.

Once you have received a diagnosis of a WTC illness, you have 2 years to file a claim with the NY State Board,

regardless of having registered using the WTC-12 form.

Can I make my treatment or monitoring appointment for the weekend or evening?

At present, the Queens Clinical Center is open Monday through Thursday. Monitoring exams are scheduled between 9:00 am and 2:00 pm. Treatment exams are available 9:00 am through 4:30 pm. We understand that your work schedule may conflict with these times. We are exploring possibilities of conducting exams during the evening or one Saturday a month. If evening or Saturday appointments are the *only* time you are able to come in for an exam, please call our scheduling line at 718-670-4174. We will take note your needs and let you know if and when these exam times become available.

I spend part of the year out of state, but still need treatment for my WTC-related health conditions. What should I do?

If you know you will be outside of the NY/NJ area for an extended period of time, please call us at 718-670-4174. We will assist you in accessing temporary care through Logistics Health, Inc. (LHI) of the WTC National Responder Program. When you return home, we will continue providing your care.

If you are planning a permanent move out of the NY/NJ area, you can also transfer into the WTC National Responder Program to continue receiving monitoring and/or treatment through LHI. Please call us at 718-670-4174 or LHI at 877-498-2911 to request a transfer.

What are the other WTC programs?

There are several different WTC programs out there to help those who worked and lived near Ground Zero, which is leading to confusion. Each program has a different focus and is designed to best meet the needs of a specific group affected by September 11th.

WTC Environmental Health Center: The advertisements that you may have seen in the subway or newspaper are not for the program that you are participating in. The WTC Environmental Health Center is a program designed primarily to provide WTC-related treatment to those people who lived in the area surrounding Ground Zero.

The WTC Health Registry: The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry and the New York City Health Department established the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Registry in 2002, with the goal of monitoring the health of people directly exposed to the WTC disaster.

The WTC Health Registry will periodically follow-up with enrollees over the next 20 years to track changes in physical and mental health. It does not provide any physical or psychological care.