

For Immediate Release

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**SENATORS KENNEDY, ENZI, CLINTON HOLD FIRST SENATE HEARING ON 9/11 HEALTH PROBLEMS**

Washington, DC – Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, ranking member Senator Mike Enzi and Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton today held a hearing on the 9/11 health effects and their continuing legacy for untold numbers of New Yorkers and others. This was the first Senate hearing on the urgent health needs affecting thousands in the wake of 9/11.

“The nation is still healing from the wounds of that day. It has touched every state in the Union, often physically because of the tens of thousands of volunteers who spent weeks or months on the cleanup and recovery efforts at Ground Zero-related areas,” Senator Kennedy said. “The health impacts of 9-11 continue to be tragic. But the data we obtain by monitoring, diagnosis and treatment will advance our knowledge in epidemiology and improve all aspects of our health care. Congress has begun to fund these efforts, but more has to be done.”

The HELP committee heard from a number of witnesses, beginning with Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who outlined the extent of the health crisis, what is currently being done to help affected populations and what is needed from the federal government to assist. In addition to the witnesses, there were a number of affected groups represented at the hearing, including firefighters, police officers, other first responders, workers, residents, students and teachers.

Below are Senator Kennedy’s full remarks, as prepared for delivery, as well as the list of witnesses.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY  
AT THE HELP COMMITTEE HEARING ON “THE LONG-TERM HEALTH IMPACTS OF SEPTEMBER 11: A  
REVIEW OF DIAGNOSIS, MONITORING AND TREATMENT EFFORTS”**

*(As Prepared For Delivery)*

I commend the ranking member and my colleague and friend, Senator Enzi, for his contributions to this hearing. I also commend my colleague, Senator Clinton, for her commitment to seeing that this hearing would happen. And I welcome our colleague, Senator Schumer, who will introduce the Mayor of New York City today.

We’re here today to consider the impact of the events of 9/11 on the lives and health of the brave men and women who responded to the call for help that day as the heroes of 9-11—the police officers, the emergency medical technicians, the construction workers, the firefighters, the sanitation workers, and numerous other professions. They were our cleanup and recovery effort, working at Ground Zero, at the Fresh Kills Landfill on Staten Island, month after month in the wake of 9/11. They are the school children who returned to their classrooms and the residents who returned to their apartments in lower Manhattan in the days and weeks after the collapse of the towers—New Yorkers, struggling to reclaim their lives after that horrendous attack.

These rescue, recovery and cleanup workers were exposed to multiple toxins and pollutants, from PCBs and dioxins to pulverized concrete and highly metallic microscopic shards of glass. They inhaled these substances into their lungs and gastrointestinal systems.

Hundreds of thousands of them have developed illnesses as a result. Healthy young fathers and mothers found they could no longer play with their children. They developed the distinct dry World Trade Center cough, chronic nasal congestion and rashes. Some found lumps in their chests and were forced to retire permanently.

Today, we’ll hear from experts who led the effort to build a realistic health infrastructure for this unprecedented emergency. I welcome our panelists, who join us from the state of New York. Mayor Bloomberg recently completed a detailed report on the steps that the City and the Federal Government should take to deal with the continuing health threats of 9-11. Welcome, Mayor Bloomberg.

Also here today are the distinguished leaders at various centers of medical excellence in 9-11 health. Dr. Robin Herbert joins us from Mount Sinai Medical Center, which has been at the forefront of treating first responders and workers, over 60 percent of whom can't even pay for their healthcare. Dr. Reibman comes to us from Bellevue Hospital, which continues to treat anyone who may have been exposed to dust and toxins from 9-11. The New York City Fire Department has also had a major role in demonstrating a clear link between recovery and clean-up work and illness, and Dr. Kerry Kelly joins us on its behalf.

Dr. Melius, from the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program, can speak to the lack of health care coverage available for responders.

Finally, Mr. Jeff Endean, from New Jersey, will share with us his own personal experience both during and following the September 11th attack, with the New York Authority Police Department.

The nation is still healing from the wounds of that day. It has touched every state in the Union, often physically because of the tens of thousands of volunteers who spent weeks or months on the cleanup and recovery efforts at Ground Zero-related areas. Hundreds of volunteers and responders from Massachusetts bravely contributed to that effort, and every one of my colleagues has constituents from their own state who have enrolled in the World Trade Center Health Registry.

Congress has begun to fund these efforts, but more has to be done. We need to provide support for the necessary diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of the long-term health impacts of 9-11. Senator Clinton's and Senator's Schumer's bill would authorize \$1.9 billion in federal funds to address these health issues, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

As we will hear from our witnesses, the health impacts of 9-11 continue to be tragic. But the data we obtain by monitoring, diagnosis and treatment will advance our knowledge in epidemiology and improve all aspects of our health care. I urge my colleagues to consider this testimony with open hearts and open minds.

#### U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Hearing: The Long-Term Health Impacts from September 11: A Review of Treatment, Diagnosis and Monitoring Efforts

Wednesday, March 21, 2007 – 10:00 am

Room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC

Witness List

**The Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, Mayor of the City of New York, New York**

**Dr. Robin Herbert, M.D., Co-Director of the World Trade Center Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program, New York, New York**

**Dr. Kerry J. Kelly, M.D., Chief Medical Officer, New York City Fire Department, New York, New York**

**Dr. Joan Reibman, M.D., Director of the Bellevue Hospital World Trade Center Environmental Health Center, New York, New York**

**Dr. Jim Melius, M.D., Ph.D., Chair, Advisory Board of the World Trade Center Medical Monitoring and Treatment Program, Albany, New York**

**Dr. Jeanne Mager Stellman, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, New York**

**Jeff Endean, ground zero volunteer and former Division Commander for Morris County, NJ Sheriff's Office**