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NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** September 10, 2019  
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**MAYOR DE BLASIO TO PROPOSE LOCAL LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE HEALTH INSURANCE TO SURVIVORS OF ALL CITY EMPLOYEES WHO DIE OF 9/11 ILLNESSES**

*Legislation would expand current law to include survivors of all City employees who die of a 9/11 illness, regardless of whether death occurs while in active service or retirement*

**NEW YORK**—Mayor de Blasio today announced that he will propose local legislation to create parity for all City employees who die of a 9/11 illness by providing health insurance coverage to their survivors.

“On our city’s darkest day, thousands of City employees answered the call. They didn’t hesitate. We need to be there for their families, now and always,” said **Mayor de Blasio**.

Currently, survivors of Police Officers, Firefighters, and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and higher rank employees in those titles who die in the line of duty receive health insurance from the City regardless of whether their family members die while in active service or after retirement. At the same time, survivors of Uniformed Correction Officers and Uniformed Sanitation Workers only receive health insurance if their family members die while in active service, and survivors of employees in other titles who die from a 9/11 illness currently do not qualify for City-sponsored health insurance.

This legislation would close any gaps in current law so that all City employees who die of a 9/11 illness are treated the same, allowing their survivors to receive City health insurance upon approval of their World Trade Center accidental death pension by the applicable City public retirement system.

Approximately 5,000 employees across several City agencies and in various titles could be covered by this legislation over time. This population represents City employees who have been verified by their respective City public retirement system and employing agency as having participated in World Trade Center rescue, recovery and cleanup operations.

“In 2017, the Staten Island 9/11 First Responders Memorial was officially unveiled. Sadly, each year there are new names added to the plaques,” said **Staten Island Borough President Oddo**.

“Just as it is our duty to be temporary stewards of the memorial that remembers and honors their brave sacrifice, it is our duty to fight for the health coverage all those first responders and their family members.”

"Those 9/11 first responders who have since died of an illness gave their last full measure of devotion so that others could live. Their families must be cared for. Every city worker who responded to 9/11 must have parity and know that no matter what, their families will have access to the benefits they deserve," said **State Senator Andrew Gounardes**.

“Since September 11, 2001, I have worked with the Federal, City and State administrations to help provide benefits for those who perished on that day and all those who worked for months at the site. I am pleased to see that each of the branches of government has not forgotten the sacrifices made on that day and the months after. This legislation along with State and Federal efforts will show our mutual commitment to all the survivors and their families,” said **Assembly Member Peter J. Abbate, Jr.**

“This city owes the family members of those heroes not only endless respect and gratitude but also meaningful resources. I commend the Mayor on his proposal to provide health insurance to survivors of all city employees who die of 9/11 related illnesses,” said **Assembly Member Marcos A. Crespo**.

“As Chair of Civil Service and Labor, as well as a former member of our City’s dedicated civil service workforce, ensuring the health and well-being of 9/11 responders, survivors and their families has been a top priority of the Committee,” said **Council Member I. Daneek Miller, Committee on Civil Service and Labor Chair**. “We advocated for all civilian responders who were at Ground Zero to be granted unlimited sick leave, and moved the City Council to lend its voice to the nationwide call for Congress to pass the law that made the Victim Compensation Fund permanent. I applaud the Administration for its proposal to provide healthcare security and peace of mind to the surviving family members of our heroes and heroines. They surely deserve it.”

“After the 9/11 attack on our city, tens of thousands of New Yorkers wasted no time in running head on into ground zero to provide any assistance needed, but unfortunately, the commitment to providing them health insurance was delayed in Washington time and time again,” said **Council Member Donovan Richards, chair of the Committee on Public Safety**. “I’m proud to support this commitment to expand health insurance to all survivors of City employees who die of 9/11 illnesses and am thankful that Mayor de Blasio has stepped up to ensure that our first responders and their families know that we have not forgotten their sacrifice.”

“The ongoing commitment our City and country owe to the survivors and families of 9/11 have no deadline, and I am thankful that the City is exploring additional tools to make good on that commitment,” said **Council Member Margaret S. Chin**. “This year, thanks to the spirited coalition driven by first responders, survivors and advocates, Congress passed legislation to permanently renew the 9/11 Victims Compensation Fund to give survivors and families the financial support they need. And by looking to expand insurance coverage to families of all City employees who passed in active service or as a result of a 9/11-related illness, the Mayor’s

proposal will help bring much-needed relief for thousands of New Yorkers who are still feeling the impacts of the terror attacks almost 20 years later. Our work continues.”

“This is a great step towards protecting our 9/11 families and keeping alive our commitment to never forget” Said **Council Member Joseph Borelli**.

“One of the best ways that we as a City can honor those that were lost in the horrific 9/11 attacks and from subsequent illnesses caused by the rescue and recovery efforts in lower Manhattan, is to expand our current legislation to include providing proper health insurance to all affected City employees’ families. Ensuring that health insurance will be available to these family members—whether or not their loved one passed while in active service or retirement with the City – is crucial. I hope this measure gives those eligible some peace of mind as they move forward. I commend Mayor de Blasio for recognizing the importance of including these 5,000 New Yorkers in the City’s ongoing response to 9/11 and for continuing to find ways that the City can provide proper healthcare to those in need,” said **Council Member Andrew Cohen**.

“This legislation would grant peace of mind to thousands of families of City employees who have been impacted by 9/11 illnesses. It sends a message that we stand by you and your families. I am proud to support the families of City employees whose service and sacrifice continues to inspire fellow New Yorkers,” said **Council Member Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.**

“After the 9/11 attack, thousands of City employees worked relentlessly in rescue, recovery, and rebuilding efforts,” said **Assembly Health Committee Chair Richard N. Gottfried**. “The families of these heroic New Yorkers should have access to health care regardless of their loved ones’ job titles. I commend Mayor de Blasio for supporting the families of those who gave their lives in service to the City.”

“Those who lost their lives on 9/11 or to a 9/11 illness are forever in our memory,” said **Council Member Barry S. Grodenchik**. “It is only right that the city establish parity in benefits for all survivors’ families.”

“In light of the recent passage of the Victims’ Compensation Fund, this is yet another step to ensuring all first responders, city employees and family members are properly taken care of after the tragedy that took place on September 11, 2001,” said **Council Member Holden**.

"18 years after the 9/11 attacks, families of public servants who either died or are suffering from 9/11 related illnesses still face uncertainty and challenges stemming from that dreadful day in 2001," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**. "By expanding health coverage to surviving family members, New York City is doing right by the brave men and women who served our City and paid with their life or their health. This is the right thing to do and thousands of deserving families will benefit from it. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio for putting forth this proposal and continuing to help the EMTs, Police officers, and Firefighters who responded when we needed them most."

“It is only proper and fitting that we stand behind all of our city employees and their families who have been devastated by the consequences of 9/11,” said **Council Member Karen Koslowitz**.

“Nearly two decades after that fateful day, our first responders and their families are still grappling with long-term, debilitating illnesses in the aftermath of 9/11. In the face of terrorism, they showed compassion, composure, and courage. Our heroes, many of whom were the breadwinners, put their lives on the line to rescue fellow New Yorkers. Today’s proposed legislation is a fitting tribute to our fallen and living heroes who deserve so much more for the sacrifices that they made without hesitation,” said **Council Member Farah N. Louis**.

“No emergency responder checked their title before deciding whether to rush into danger in search of victims. They were heroes, disregarding their own wellbeing to help complete strangers. They did it because it had to be done. Today, we recognize that the City must extend health insurance to survivors of all city employees, regardless of their title, who die from a 9/11-related illness. We do it because it has to be done. I steadfastly support this cause and thank the Mayor for taking this important and necessary step to create parity in health coverage for the families of 9/11 victims,” said **Council Member Francisco Moya**.

"New Yorkers of all backgrounds pitched in to rebuild lower Manhattan and get New York City back on its feet in the wake of 9/11. This led to illnesses that continue to impact families to this day, and will in years to come. Providing healthcare for these families is a meaningful step for those who served and helped rebuild the greatest city in the world," said **Councilmember Keith Powers**.

“The tragic events that occurred on September 11, 2001 will live in infamy and New Yorkers will never forget. Thousands of New York’s service men and women were affected and are still impacted by the events that transpired that day,” said **Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez** “As we move towards a brighter future, our government cannot leave behind those who put everything on the line, including their lives, to protect this City and its inhabitants. I applaud Mayor de Blasio and his effort to bring much needed help to survivors of 9/11.”

"On September 11, 2001, thousands of first responders selflessly headed to Ground Zero and sacrificed their own wellbeing for their fellow New Yorkers in the hours, days and weeks following this darkest day in our state's history," said **Council Member Paul Vallone**. "By guaranteeing health insurance to the survivors of these brave heroes, we properly honor their service and their memory."

“I’m grateful to Mayor de Blasio for advancing this important legislation. It is fair, just and honorable for the City to provide health coverage for the survivors of our employees who selflessly gave of themselves and are now paying with their lives” Said **Council Member Kalman Yeger**.

“The dedicated men and women of the New York City Department of Sanitation and all New York City workers express their heartfelt commendation and sincerest gratitude to Mayor Bill de Blasio, to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and to all members of the New York City

Council for this initiative to provide well-deserved and much-needed support to the families of those who died as a result of 9/11 illnesses. We can never relieve the pain of their loss, but we can take this important step to provide health benefits as a way to affirm: We will never forget,” said **Harry Nespoli, President, Uniformed Sanitationmen’s Association and Chair, Municipal Labor Committee.**

“We applaud Mayor de Blasio and City Council Speaker Johnson for supporting legislation that would protect the families of 9/11 rescue and recovery workers/volunteers who risked their lives in that horrific attack against our city. DC 37 has been out front in the fight to ensure that those families get the health benefits they need. We are grateful to the Mayor and City Council for taking this key first step to get it done,” said **Henry Garrido, Executive Director, DC 37.**

“This critical legislation put forth by Mayor de Blasio could not come at a more critical time for New York City Correction Officers and other city workers, who are still suffering from 9/11 related illnesses. Extending the health insurance coverage to the spouses and dependents of our retired fallen brothers and sisters will ensure their families will continue to receive vital health insurance benefits. We are deeply grateful for the Mayor’s leadership on this important issue,” said **Elias Husamudeen, President, Correction Officers’ Benevolent Association.**

“Mayor de Blasio recognized the gross unfairness in how some city employees were being treated. We applaud his work with the City Council and Speaker Corey Johnson for finding a way to address this inequality,” said **Michael Mulgrew, president of the United Federation of Teachers.**

“I thank the Mayor for his forethought on this important issue and urge the City Council to pass the proposed legislation. As City employees, so many of our survivor members—such as School Safety Agents, NYCHA workers and Peace Officers in public hospitals and at CUNY facilities—and their families, will receive benefits for their 9-11 service,” said **Gregory Floyd, President, Teamsters Local 237.**

“Let me take this opportunity to thank Mayor de Blasio for his efforts to provide health benefits to families of civilians who pass away as a result of 9/11 related illnesses. Civilians who worked side by side with the brave members of the uniformed services, not only at Ground Zero but throughout the City deserve to have their families protected,” said **Joe Colangelo, President, Local 246 SEIU.**

“Tragic reminders of 9/11 still haunt us today as more of our employees become inflicted with illnesses. Those who participated in getting New York back on its feet shouldn’t need to worry about their loved ones if they become ill. We applaud Mayor de Blasio for advancing legislation to ensure survivors of all city employees receive health insurance coverage after their loved one passes away,” said **Dennis Trainor, Vice President, Communications Workers of America District 1.**

“Thank you Mayor de Blasio for your proposed local law that fills a critical gap in the help needed by families of City Employees who have died from their 9/11 injuries,” said **Benjamin Chevat Executive, Director 911 Health Watch.**

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