



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Dave A. Chokshi, MD MSc
Commissioner

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20 YEARS ON, NYC HEALTH DEPARTMENT TRACKS HEALTH IMPACTS OF SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS

The World Trade Center Health Registry tracks the short-term and long-term health effects of 71,000 people who were directly exposed to the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center

September 10, 2021 – As the City observes the 20th anniversary of the horrific terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Health Department remains committed to researching and understanding the long-term health impacts of those exposed in the aftermath, and assisting its health registry enrollees in obtaining care. As part of its remembrance this year, the Health Department hosted a town hall on the work of the [World Trade Center Health Registry](#), and filmed a series of testimonial videos about enrollees' health experiences.

“The tragic events of 9/11 continue to have a lasting emotional and physical impact on thousands of New Yorkers,” said **Health Commissioner Dr. Dave A. Chokshi**. “We thank our World Trade Center Health Registry enrollees for their participation in the Registry so that we can understand and act upon health effects of this disaster for years to come.”

The World Trade Center Health Registry (the Registry), founded in 2002, studies the short-term and long-term health effects of 71,000 people who were directly exposed to the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11 and voluntarily enrolled in the Registry in 2003-04. Enrollees represent a diverse group of those exposed to the 9/11-disaster and its aftermath, including first responders, clean-up workers, people who lived, worked or attended school (K-12) in Lower Manhattan, women who were pregnant, and passers-by. Registry findings help inform health care for the estimated 400,000 people who were directly exposed to the 9/11 disaster in New York City.

To date, the Registry has over [150 publications](#) on the health impacts and other consequences of 9/11 for its survivors. These include impacts on physical, mental, and behavioral health, quality of life, functioning, health care needs, as well as early retirement and the impacts of experiencing subsequent disasters such as Hurricane Sandy. Some key findings are as follows:

- 9/11 has had enduring impacts on many responders' and survivors' physical and mental health, health behaviors, quality of life and functioning. See more [here](#) and [here](#).
- The most common 9/11-related health outcomes are post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, asthma, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and sinusitis. These conditions often co-occur. Many people have more than one mental health

condition, more than one physical health condition or a combination of mental and physical health conditions. Co-occurring conditions have a greater impact on quality of life, functioning, perceived overall health and unmet health care needs than any one condition alone. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).

- Examining the course of PTSD over 15+ years among survivors and responders, we found that most enrollees did not screen positive for PTSD, and some experienced early PTSD that resolved. Some had a later onset of PTSD and others had persistent PTSD. Health in general and quality life is adversely affected by symptoms of PTSD, especially relationships and the ability to work. See more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Importantly, some enrollees experienced positive psychological growth after 9/11, also referred to as post-traumatic growth. Learn more [here](#).
- In addition to mental health and respiratory conditions, we have identified several emerging conditions associated with 9/11, including heart disease, stroke, pulmonary fibrosis, autoimmune diseases, and hearing problems. Learn more at the following links: [here](#), [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Exposure to 9/11 is also associated with increased smoking, drinking, and substance use among adults, including opioid misuse and misuse of prescription medications. Learn more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).
- Children experienced similar health outcomes as adults exposed to 9/11, including asthma, PTSD symptoms, behavioral problems, and increased risk of substance use. See more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Studies are ongoing regarding cancer and mortality, and other emerging medical condition studies are planned or ongoing, including those on neuropathy and cognitive impairment. Learn more [here](#) and [here](#).
- Through the Registry's ongoing treatment referral program, we learned that many enrollees respond to personalized outreach to encourage them to apply for health care through the [World Trade Center Health Program](#), including those suffering from PTSD who are more likely to be withdrawn or socially isolated. Learn more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

The Registry is the largest post-disaster registry in U.S. history and one of longest running in the world. To learn more about the Registry and its work, [visit here](#).

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