

9.11

# World Trade Center Health Program

## ANNUAL MEMBER NEWSLETTER

### 2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

 [WWW.CDC.GOV/WTC](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/WTC)  
 1-888-982-4748



Photo by K. Cordek



Getty/Juntaski



Photo by I. Spring



Scan the QR code with your phone's camera and follow the link to view this newsletter online.

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Eligibility Expansion for Pentagon and Shanksville Responders
- Program News
- Updates on Medical Benefits
- Program Spotlight
- Helpful Resources

## A Message from the Administrator



Members,

This past year, the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program continued to improve how we deliver quality WTC-related healthcare to you. We also committed ourselves to addressing and helping to overcome the obstacles between you and your care.

Last year, we expanded covered treatments for our members including certain cancer, mental health, and dental procedures and treatments. Our research team began work to develop a Youth Research Cohort to use for future studies on the long-term health impacts on those aged 21 or younger at the time of 9/11. Also, we updated our website with improved navigation and new content to help you easily get the information you need.

Our Nationwide Provider Network (NPN) administrator, Managed Care Advisors (MCA)-Sedgwick, expanded their network of providers last summer. This gave NPN members access to more Program providers for their care. We continue to work with MCA and remain committed to improving the NPN experience.

Last fall, we launched our eNews service to keep you better informed about Program news and updates via email. This service allows you to choose the topics you want to hear about. You can sign up and manage your eNews subscription directly through the Program's homepage.

Your stories inspire us in our mission to provide quality WTC-related healthcare, and to tell those stories we launched our in-person exhibition, "Health Effects of 9/11" at the David J. Sencer CDC Museum. You can visit this in person through April of this year.

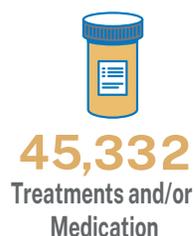
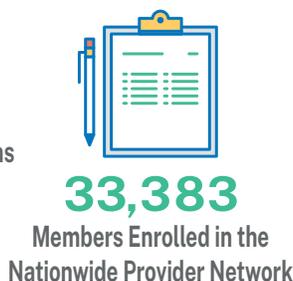
We are constantly striving to achieve our mission of providing you with high-quality, compassionate WTC-related care. Thank you for letting us serve you in 2023, and we look forward to helping you through 2024 and beyond.

Sincerely,

John Howard, M.D.  
Administrator, WTC Health Program

### Program Statistics

(as of December 2023)



### Subscribe to WTC Health Program eNews

Stay connected with the WTC Health Program. Visit [www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html) to sign up for Program news and updates. Get info such as coverage updates, outreach event information, 9/11 health research updates, and more delivered straight to your inbox.

As a Program eNews subscriber, you can select different topics that you want to receive updates about, such as Program News and the Youth Research Cohort. More topics are coming soon!

### Thank you for Participating in our Member Survey

Last fall, the WTC Health Program sent a survey out to all members. The survey had questions about your overall satisfaction with the Program and provided an opportunity for you to share your thoughts.

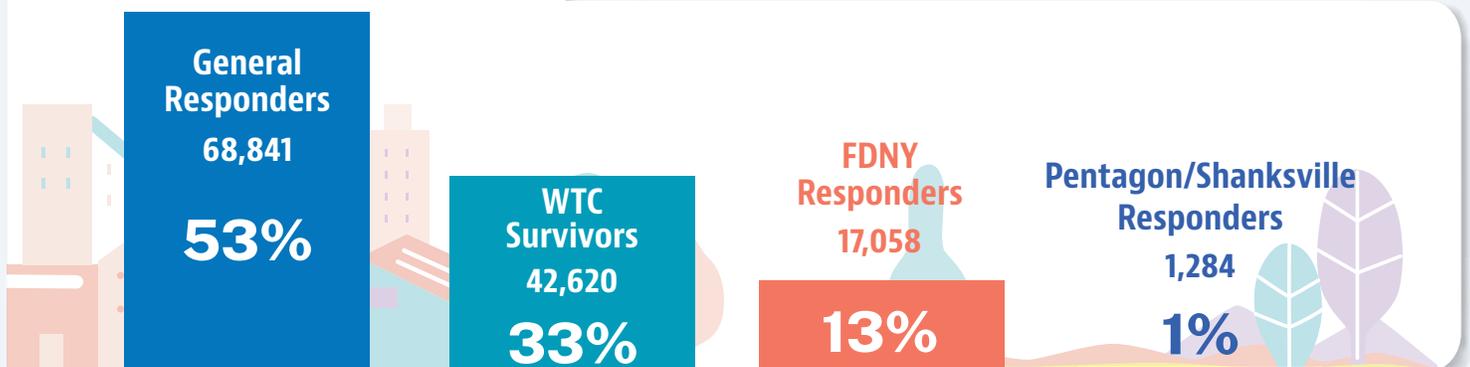
Thank you to all who have sent back the surveys. We are currently reviewing your responses to learn about your member experiences. Your responses will help us improve the Program and serve you better.

If you have specific questions or concerns about your experience in the WTC Health Program, please call the WTC Health Program call center at 1-888-982-4748.

### Need Help Finding a Provider in the Nationwide Provider Network (NPN)?

If you need help finding a provider, please call the NPN administrator, Managed Care Advisors (MCA)-Sedgwick at 1-800-416-2898. There is not an online NPN provider lookup tool available for members at this time.

### Enrollment by Member Type



\*Data is current as of December 2023.

See more program data at: [www.cdc.gov/wtc/ataglance.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/ataglance.html)

## Program News (cont.)

### Stay Updated on the Latest 9/11-Related Health Research

In 2023, our dedicated research team made significant strides in advancing the understanding of 9/11-related health topics. They shared their findings through publications and webinars and provided opportunities to fund future 9/11-related health research. Their work continues to inform Program care.

Explore the research section of the WTC Health Program website at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/research.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/research.html).



Scan the QR code with your phone's camera and follow the link to the research webpage.

### Have You Used our New Feedback Form?

This year, the Program launched a feedback form allowing members to send formal feedback directly to the WTC Health Program. Use of this form is open to everyone. A name and email are required to submit the feedback form. When you submit the form, you will receive a confirmation email with a tracking number. You should expect to receive a formal response from the Program in 3-5 business days.

Visit [oasis.cdc.gov/feedback](http://oasis.cdc.gov/feedback) to find the form and provide feedback.

Please do not use this form for immediate, personal support. If you have questions about your personal membership or care, please call the WTC Health Program Call Center at 1-888-982-4748. ■

## "Health Effects of 9/11" on View In-Person

### Never Forgotten: "Health Effects of 9/11" Exhibition on View at the CDC Museum Through April 2024 Features Member Stories of Healing and Resilience

The WTC Health Program marked last year's 9/11 Day of Remembrance with the opening of the Health Effects of 9/11 exhibition at the David J. Sencer CDC Museum in Atlanta, Georgia. The Program worked closely with the CDC Museum and the 9/11 community to develop this exhibition. This effort raised awareness about the ongoing health effects linked to 9/11 exposures.

When WTC Health Program member and retired New York City firefighter, Tim Murphy, saw the media coverage about the exhibition opening, he was relieved to see "this important story wasn't forgotten and was being told," decades after his time as a WTC responder.

Tim, who now lives in Georgia, shared the news with fellow 9/11 responders in the NYC Shields of Georgia, an organization that he co-founded. Last fall, the group visited the CDC Museum to experience the exhibition firsthand.





Photo by CDC/NIOSH



Photo by CDC/NIOSH

Tim Murphy and a group of fellow responders at the exhibition.

Reflecting on the visit, Tim said, “The information in the exhibition was well-presented and moving. It is a powerful reminder of those who responded who were standing beside us aiding in the recovery who have died in the years since 9/11 and those who continue to struggle with a range of 9/11 ailments every day.”

Twenty-two years after 9/11, nearly 80,000 people have physical and mental health conditions related to their exposure to dust, smoke, debris, and the traumatic events. This exhibition offers CDC Museum visitors an opportunity to learn and reflect on these lingering health effects through visuals and firsthand stories of sacrifice and survival. At its core, this exhibition is about the resilience of this brave community we are so privileged to help heal.

As the WTC Health Program provides compassionate medical care and treatment to our over 129,000 members like Tim and his fellow NYC Shields of Georgia responders, we, and all those who visit the exhibition, can draw inspiration from their stories of healing and resilience.

The Health Effects of 9/11 exhibition is on view at the CDC Museum through April 26, 2024. Information to help you plan your visit is available on the CDC Museum website, [www.cdc.gov/museum/exhibits/wtc.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/museum/exhibits/wtc.htm). A digital version of the exhibition can also be viewed online at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/exhibition](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/exhibition) or by scanning this QR code. ■



**Note:** The content and images in this exhibition may be sensitive in nature to some audiences, especially responders and survivors of 9/11. Discretion is advised.

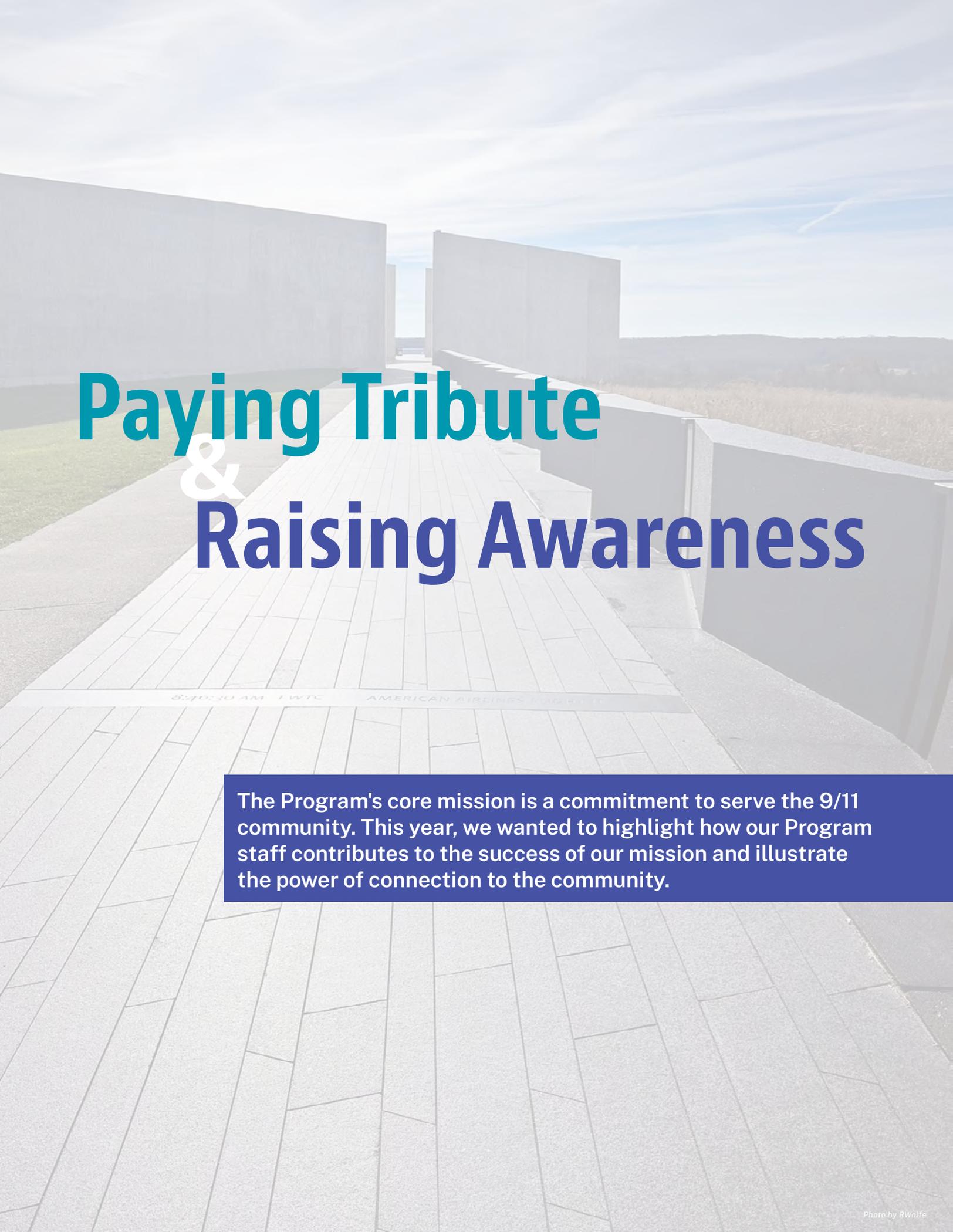


## Youth Research Cohort

The WTC Health Program is establishing a Youth Research Cohort. This research cohort will enable future studies on how the events of 9/11 affected the health and education of those who were 21 years old or younger at the time of their exposure.

We are finding ways to involve the 9/11 community and other external partners in the development of the Youth Research Cohort, helping to ensure their participation at every step.

Stay up to date and learn more about the Youth Research Cohort by subscribing to the Youth Research Cohort eNews topic when you sign up for Program eNews at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html).



# Paying Tribute & Raising Awareness

8:40:30 AM 1 WTC AMERICAN AIRLINES TOWER

The Program's core mission is a commitment to serve the 9/11 community. This year, we wanted to highlight how our Program staff contributes to the success of our mission and illustrate the power of connection to the community.

## Program Staff Visit National 9/11 Memorials

In 2023, WTC Health Program staff visited the Pentagon National Memorial, the Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and the National September 11 Memorial & Museum in New York City. These visits were an opportunity for staff to honor the precious lives memorialized at these solemn sites while raising awareness in the 9/11 community about the Program.

Throughout the year, September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) leadership joined us for tours of the national memorials and outreach events to raise awareness about the benefits available under each program. In October, Program staff met with VCF Special Master Allison Turkel to tour the Pentagon Memorial. During our visit, we learned about the design competition to develop the memorial, the motifs used to honor the victims, and plans for expansion.

Program staff then visited the Flight 93 National Memorial with VCF leadership to pay tribute to the passengers and crewmembers honored there and to engage with the local community at an informational session hosted by the local volunteer fire department. Some local media outlets covered our visit to help raise awareness about the benefits available to Shanksville responders.

## Expanded Eligibility for Pentagon and Shanksville Responders

The WTC Health Program is pleased that the recently passed 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) expands Program enrollment eligibility for Pentagon and Shanksville 9/11 responders.

Under the original Zadroga Act, the types of responders eligible for enrollment in the WTC Health Program based on their response activities at the Pentagon and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania was limited. The 2024 NDAA amends the Zadroga Act to expand eligibility for Pentagon and Shanksville responders to include active duty, retired, or reserve members of the military, civilian employees of the Department of Defense (DOD), or certain DOD contractors who responded to the Pentagon or Shanksville sites.

We are actively reviewing the NDAA's expanded eligibility requirements to determine what regulatory changes are needed to implement the new law.

Be sure to check the Program's website [www.cdc.gov/wtc](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc) and subscribe for our eNews updates at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/enews.html). We will be providing updates as this process moves forward to ensure the newly eligible individuals can access the Program's healthcare benefits, as soon as possible. ■



# Medical Benefits Updates

## Dental Services Coverage Has Expanded

The WTC Health Program announced updates to its dental services coverage policy. Now, eligible members who may be covered for limited pre-treatment dental services are:

- Individuals with certified WTC-related head/neck cancer,
- Individuals with planned WTC-related organ transplants.
- Individuals undergoing treatment for any WTC-related cancer, and

Covered dental services include a one-time dental check-up prior to cancer treatment or organ or hematopoietic stem cell (HSC) transplant for eligible members. Covered services may also include medically necessary follow-up dental care provided before an organ transplant or the start of chemotherapy and/or radiation.

There are certain situations where dental care may be covered. Details on important coverage and authorization information are available at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/dental\\_mgus\\_20230317.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/dental_mgus_20230317.html).

## Limited Services Related to Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (MGUS) Now Covered

The Program now covers certain medical services related to MGUS. MGUS is a condition where blood proteins are abnormal, indicating a possible future cancer risk.

The WTC Health Program has and continues to cover the diagnostic workup for MGUS as part of testing for potential WTC-related cancer. The WTC Health Program now also covers any necessary follow-up evaluations and ongoing monitoring for MGUS with some limitations.

While MGUS is not eligible for certification as a WTC-related health condition, the expanded Program coverage of tests is important for potential WTC-related cancer detection.

To read about authorization and coverage details, visit [www.cdc.gov/wtc/dental\\_mgus\\_20230317.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/dental_mgus_20230317.html).

## Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR-T) Therapy Now a Covered Treatment

The Program now covers a cancer treatment called Chimeric Antigen Receptor T-cell (CAR-T) Therapy.

CAR-T therapy is a type of cancer treatment done when cancer treatments have failed, or cancer has relapsed. In CAR-T therapy, a cell, taken from a patient's blood, is changed in the laboratory so it will attack cancer cells; the altered cells are then reintroduced in the patient.

The patient receives special cells through an infusion in a hospital or clinic. This allows for doctors to watch for any side effects. These services must be authorized by the WTC Health Program before the patient receives treatment.

To learn more about treatment and authorization details, visit [www.cdc.gov/wtc/newsCAR-TTherapy20230705.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/newsCAR-TTherapy20230705.html).

## Repetitive Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (rTMS) Treatment Coverage

The Program updated coverage for rTMS, a mental health treatment for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) without Psychosis. The updated coverage allows for more flexibility in the treatment schedule, and expands coverage of rTMS treatment to members with the following medical history:

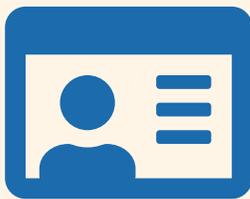
- A history of an isolated seizure without recurrence that has not required medication.
- A history of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Additional details on the update for rTMS are available at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/ppm.html#medical\\_transcranial](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/ppm.html#medical_transcranial).

## Policy for Drug Coverage and Off-Label Drug Use is Published

The WTC Health Program published guidelines for determining which drugs are eligible for coverage. The coverage guidelines for Off-Label Drug Use of FDA-Approved Drugs outlines how and when the WTC Health Program will cover medically necessary off-label drugs.

For details about the guidelines, visit [www.cdc.gov/wtc/policies.html#coverageDrugs](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/policies.html#coverageDrugs) for the Drug Coverage Policy and Procedure, and [www.cdc.gov/wtc/ppm.html#pharmacy\\_offLabel](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/ppm.html#pharmacy_offLabel) for the Off-Label Drug Use Medical Coverage Determination. ■



### Reminder: Primary Health Insurance is Required for all Members

Under the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act of 2010 (Zadroga Act), all WTC Health Program members must have primary health insurance, including pharmacy coverage. The WTC Health Program is a limited health benefit program that provides medical monitoring and treatment for certified WTC-related health conditions. It doesn't cover all health issues like primary health insurance does.

If you don't have health insurance, it will affect the Program's ability to pay for your monitoring and treatment.

Your benefits counselor at your Clinical Center of Excellence or the Nationwide Provider Network can help you apply for health insurance if you do not have primary health insurance.

Find out more about the health insurance requirement at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/ohi.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/ohi.html).

# September 11th Victim Compensation Fund Update

The September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) and the WTC Health Program work together very closely; however, they are separate and distinct programs. An individual must register with the VCF and enroll in the WTC Health Program separately. The VCF is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice. The VCF provided the following updates that may be of interest to WTC Health Program members.

## 2023 Annual Report

The VCF's 12th Annual Report was issued in February and provides a comprehensive look at the VCF activities and advances throughout the year. The past year's highlights included the appointment of permanent Special Master Allison Turkel, under whose leadership the program made the highest annual number of award decisions, totaling the largest dollar amount awarded in a single year since the VCF reopened in 2011. As of December 31, 2023, the VCF had awarded a total of \$12.8 billion. The VCF also renewed its strong commitment to reaching all those who may be eligible for compensation but may not be aware of their potential eligibility. Stathi Patseas, the new VCF Manager of Communications and External Affairs, joined the VCF in December to focus on outreach and awareness efforts. Read more about the VCF's activities and accomplishments, at [www.vcf.gov/reports](http://www.vcf.gov/reports).

## Transformation



The VCF team is committed to transforming systems and processes to better serve the 9/11 community. In September, the VCF released a short video by Special Master Allison Turkel on why Registration with the VCF is important (even if you are not sick), and how the VCF is transforming for the future.

The Transformation mission remains the same: to reduce the time to issue awards to VCF claimants by designing a modern, victim-centric claims system supported by streamlined business processes and automation.

At the heart of VCF Transformation is the implementation of myVCF, a new online claims system, which will launch in 2024. myVCF will make it easier to file a complete claim and will reduce the time it takes the VCF to review and pay claims. To learn more about Transformation and myVCF visit [www.vcf.gov/transformation](http://www.vcf.gov/transformation).



## VCF Questions?

For more information about the VCF or for any questions, visit [www.vcf.gov](http://www.vcf.gov) or call the VCF Helpline at 1-855-885-1555. Please note: the WTC Health Program call center and Program providers are not able to provide information on VCF claims. ■

## Mental Health Resources

Know that you're not alone and that the WTC Health Program is here to help in times of crisis.

The WTC Health Program continues to be here for members and remains committed to sustaining a growing community where all can feel safe, hopeful, and connected. Visit our Mental Health Resources page to learn more.

If you have questions or concerns about your emotional well-being or symptoms that cause distress, please contact your Program doctor. The WTC Health Program has expert mental health providers with experience providing care to Program members.

If you or someone you know is struggling or is in crisis, help is available. Call or text 988 or chat online at [www.988lifeline.org](http://www.988lifeline.org).



## Who Do I Call When I Have Questions About...?

### CALL CENTER

For information about:

- Enrollment
- Appeals
- Program Benefits
- Program Policies
- Updating Contact Information

Call the WTC Health Program Call Center at **1-888-982-4748**

### CCE OR NPN

For information about:

- Appointments
- Care
- Treatment
- Medications
- Case Management
- Clinic Transfers

Call your CCE or NPN

### PHARMACY

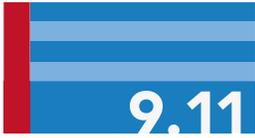
For information about:

- Pharmacy Benefits
- Filling Prescriptions

Call Express Scripts at **1-800-935-7179**



Scan the QR code to find important numbers and additional contact information.



## World Trade Center Health Program

National Institute for Occupational  
Safety and Health (NIOSH)  
1090 Tusculum Ave, MS C48  
Cincinnati, OH 45226-1998

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### Follow the WTC Health Program

World Trade Center Health Program



Getty/ Sean Pavone

### Spread the Word!

If you know someone who responded to the WTC, Pentagon, or Shanksville sites — or lived, worked, or went to school/daycare in Lower Manhattan or parts of Brooklyn on or after 9/11— encourage them to visit [www.cdc.gov/wtc/interest.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/interest.html), scan the QR code below, or call the Program at 1-888-982-4748 to learn more.

You can also contact our Outreach and Education partners. They can provide valuable information and support for those who may be eligible. More information can be found at [www.cdc.gov/wtc/outreach.html](http://www.cdc.gov/wtc/outreach.html).

Moving? If you have moved or are planning to move, please let us know.

Call 1-888-982-4748 to update your contact information to be sure you receive important Program information.



Scan this QR code and follow the link to learn more about how to apply to the WTC Health Program

