

Administrator's Remarks

Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

15 February 2012

Good afternoon and welcome to the second meeting of the Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee of the World Trade Center Health Program.

Stephen Levin, M.D.

It is with sadness that we begin our meeting today noting not only the passing of responders and survivors following September 11, 2001, but also the passing of Dr. Stephen Levin, Professor of Preventive Medicine at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

For over 40 years, Dr. Levin treated, counseled and fought for thousands of patients who were ill because of hazardous exposures in their workplace.

As Co-director of the World Trade Center Worker and Volunteer Medical Screening Program at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, he was an early, and prominent, figure fighting for a long-term health program to identify and treat individuals who worked or volunteered at the former World Trade Center site.

For all his tireless work on behalf of the World Trade Center Health Program during its earliest and most difficult time, we honor him and his service to his patients, his city, his country, and to all of us.

Please join me in a moment of silence to honor the recent passings of responders, survivors and Dr. Stephen Levin.

Thank you.

I have four items for you before you begin your meeting today.

1. Teleconference Meeting on 24 January

Let me first apologize for the technical problems which caused a cancellation of the 24 January teleconference meeting of the Committee. We have taken steps to ensure there will be no repeat performance if the Committee should want to hold another teleconference meeting in the future.

2. Eligibility Criteria for Pentagon and Shanksville Responders

During this meeting you will hear a report regarding scientific findings and support for establishing the statutorily-required criteria for Pentagon and Shanksville responders. Commander Robert McCleery of the NIOSH Division of Surveillance, Health Evaluations and Field Studies in Cincinnati, Ohio has provided a report, which you have already received, and today will make a presentation regarding his research and potential eligibility criteria for these groups of responders.

Thank you in advance for your consultation on this important issue. Please note that no formal written communication from the Committee on the eligibility criteria is required, the meeting transcript will suffice.

3. Research Needs

I also appreciate the Committee's continuing consultative thoughts on research needs for the World Trade Center Health Program. Your thoughts to date have been very helpful.

In addition to the formal research funding announcement from the NIOSH Office of Extramural Programs, the Committee's views about important knowledge gaps and research needs will be placed on the World Trade Center Health Program's website.

Again, thank you in advance for your consultation on this important issue. Please note that no formal written communication from the Committee on research needs is required, the meeting transcript will suffice.

4. Petition to Add Cancer

As you continue your discussion of Petition 001 to add cancer, or types of cancer, to the List of World Trade Center-related health conditions, please keep in mind that the Zadroga Act specifies in Section 3312(a)(6)(C) that the Advisory Committee must submit their recommendation on the petition to the Administrator within 60 days or by a date specified by the Administrator not to exceed 180 days from the date of the Administrator's request. My request for a recommendation on Petition 001 was made to the Committee on October 5, 2011.

The maximum 180 day period for the Committee's consideration of Petition 001 ends on April 2, 2012. I had asked the Committee to provide its recommendation by March 2, 2012 in order to provide enough time for the Committee Chair to prepare the Committee's advice to the Administrator. However, since the opportunity for the Committee to meet on January 24, 2012 was canceled, I would consider modifying the due date for the Committee's recommendation. If the Committee believes that more time is necessary to reach a recommendation, I would ask you to discuss that issue during this meeting, and for the Chair to send a written email request to me for more time by the close of this meeting on 16 February.

Any additional discussion on Petition 001 must occur in another public meeting, so please keep in mind scheduling issues when determining whether additional time would be beneficial. In any case, the April 2nd due date for a recommendation is a *statutory* requirement, and no extension beyond April 2nd can be approved.

Thank you.