

WTC Medical Monitoring for Building Cleanup Workers

Pruebas de Salud para Trabajadores de Limpieza de WTC

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MOBILE MEDICAL UNIT TO DETECT HEALTH PROBLEMS OF BUILDING CLEAN-UP WORKERS NEAR GROUND ZERO

[NEW YORK] The World Trade Center Mobile Medical Monitoring Unit will begin operation near City Hall Park on Monday, January 14, 2002. A press conference will mark the opening at 9:00 a.m. at the unit's site at the southwest corner of Broadway and Barclay.

This initiative is a joint project of the Center for the Biology of Natural Systems at Queens College, City University of New York; Latin American Workers' Project; and the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH). The unit will provide medical examinations for building clean-up workers in the vicinity of the collapsed World Trade Center towers. Medical testing will focus on respiratory problems and other targeted health problems, as well as general physical exams.

The project was initiated in response to concerns about day laborers and other workers performing clean-up tasks. Clean-up workers are particularly vulnerable to hazards arising from contact with toxic substances in the debris at Ground Zero, according to NYCOSH Director Joel Shufro. "Many day laborers are Spanish-speaking immigrants with little health and safety training," he said. "The medical unit goes straight to the problem area, offering the basic medical and educational resources the clean-up crews need."

"We are aiming to help the most neglected, least protected workers, who might otherwise receive no medical care for occupational health problems. As they cleaned, they stirred up and inhaled injurious dusts. We want to identify their illnesses and provide them with properly fitting respirators to protect themselves in the future," said Steven Markowitz, MD, an occupational medicine physician who is directing the medical team from the City University of New York.

The unit will be open on weekdays between 8 am and 8 pm from January 14 to February 1, 2002, serving eligible participants by appointment. In addition to a free physical exam, medical and occupational histories, breathing test, urinalysis, complete blood count and blood chemistry panel, participants will also receive education, respirator fit-testing and a free half-mask respirator with HEPA filters.

The September 11th Fund sponsored by The New York Community Trust and United Way of New York City are providing financial support for this project.