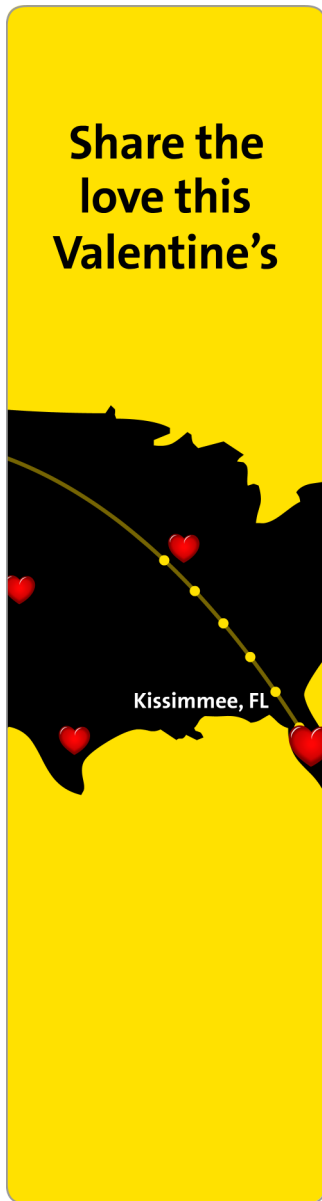


NEW YORK POST

1ST STUDY FOR 9/11 TOXIC TOLL

By SUSAN EDELMAN



January 28, 2007 -- The state has launched the first study of deaths among World Trade Center rescue and recovery workers - a grim toll that now exceeds 100, officials told The Post.

With a \$165,000 federal grant from 9/11 health czar John Howard, the state is contributing at least twice that in staff and resources to study what killed the cops, firefighters and other workers who have died after searching for survivors or helping in the cleanup.

"We want to know about every death, so we can evaluate any patterns with fatalities," said Kitty Gelber, chief epidemiologist with the state Bureau of Occupational Health. "People need to let us know who was there and who died."

So far, the study has listed "over 100 deaths," Gelber said. The names were culled from the city's WTC health registry, labor unions and news reports, she said.

The study is now seeking data from the WTC medical monitoring program at Mount Sinai Hospital, the FDNY, medical examiners, and a class-action lawsuit for 9,000 Ground Zero workers.

About 95 workers - mostly cops and firefighters - have died of respiratory illness, heart failure or cancer, said lawyer David Worby.

The state has yet to determine the causes of the 100-plus deaths it has identified. Several may involve car crashes or suicides, but all are of interest, Gelber said.

The goal is to detect trends to help doctors monitor, test and treat 9/11 workers.

"Let us learn what we can to get the treatment as good as possible now," Gelber said.

The study will gather each worker's medical records before and after 9/11 and their time at Ground Zero or the Fresh Kills landfill or on trucks and barges that moved debris. Researchers will also interview relatives.

"While some have attributed a number of deaths to work at the WTC site, the medical link to those fatalities has not been established," said a city Law Department spokeswoman. "We must be very careful not to reach conclusions in advance of scientific and medical proof. The claim that over 90 workers have died is simply unsupported."

To report the death of a WTC responder, call toll free statewide: (866) 807- 2130 or (518) 402-7900. The e-mail address is wtcfatality@health.state.ny.us.

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