

I want to start by thanking Representatives Maloney and Nadler for their tireless support of the people in lower Manhattan. Their actions demonstrate that someone is listening and knows the seriousness of the health issues people are experiencing as a direct result of the attack on the WTC. I also want to thank them for inviting to me to come here today and speak. It is an honor to be here.

My name is Kelly Colangelo, a former resident of the Financial District and a current resident of Battery Park City in lower Manhattan.

In the 3 years since the horrific attack on the World Trade Center, a 16-acre office complex 700 feet from my John Street apartment, I continue to experience the onset of new medical symptoms. Immediately after the collapse and while the fires burned, I suffered from rashes, headaches, a chronic cough, sinus problems, shortness of breath, sore throats, and chronic fatigue. Since that time, I have experienced worsening abdominal attacks which have landed me in the emergency room and for which no doctor has yet to identify the cause.

I have also been diagnosed with new allergies, mild symptoms of asthma, and gastro esophageal reflux disease (GERD). Over the years, my life has been busy with doctors' appointments, numerous medical tests, and acquiring numerous medications at the pharmacy. But, not ONE single doctor is tracking all my symptoms and diagnoses and is investigating why my health is worsening.

I have not, and I will not stand by idle and just accept that these new diagnoses and symptoms are occurring randomly. As the years go by, I wonder, "What will be next?" Will I become part of a cancer cluster in 10 to 15 years? Will I become seriously ill because my government did not protect me? What if I lose my job, as well as my health insurance? As an American citizen in this situation, I should not have to be consumed by these worries.

Residents, students, and all people who worked downtown and in Brooklyn on and after September 11, 2001 were exposed to toxic contaminants as a direct result of the WTC collapse and the fires that burned for 100 days. The EPA even admitted the WTC dust that covered our homes and offices was toxic.

An estimated 30,000 people lived within ¾ mile of the WTC and an estimated 80,000 people worked in the same vicinity. These numbers do not include the children who attended day care and school in the vicinity. These children are the future of this country and are at risk of becoming seriously ill because their government did not protect them. Will we see a pattern of similar illnesses in these children in the next 10-15 years as well? Why should they suffer – they are just innocent children.

Philanthropic funding is not enough and not consistent enough to initiate and maintain a program to monitor and care for the 100,000 plus people whose health has been jeopardized by returning to their homes and jobs after September 11. We need long-term federal funding to give healthcare experts the tools to initiate and maintain a medical screening and treatment program for us. Unlike the \$20 million WTC Health Registry, this program would screen ill people, track their symptoms, and provide these people with medical treatment at no cost, should they not be able to afford it.

The same administration that allowed Christine Todd Whitman to lie to us in 2001 about the safety of the air we were breathing must be proactive and address our health needs now – we have waited long enough. No one in this administration or in this room can silence us because we are Americans and deserve to be heard – and we deserve more than their silence in return. We deserve to be protected by our government – and not ignored.

This administration needs to get its priorities in order and its first priority should be to take care of its own people. Thank you.