

**World Trade Center 09-11 Clean Up Crew at Mt. Sinai Hospital uses ndd EasyOne**

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Funds Sought To Monitor The Health Of Rescuers

By DAVID W. CHEN

Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton and a number of medical experts yesterday urged President Bush to quickly approve \$90 million in financing for a program that would monitor the long-term health of thousands of rescue workers who assisted in the World Trade Center recovery effort.

The program is part of a \$5 billion emergency spending package to fight terrorism that Congress approved by overwhelming margins last month.



But if Mr. Bush fails to approve the package by an Aug. 31 deadline, the \$90 million proposal—plus such other plans as spending \$100 million to improve communications links for police officers and firefighters—will evaporate.

So far, the Bush administration has signaled wariness, if not reluctance, about the package, which some officials suggest would be fiscally irresponsible during budget tightening.

Indeed, as if to cushion against possible disappointment should Mr. Bush not approve the package, administration officials noted that \$32 million had already been earmarked to deal with health issues in Lower Manhattan through the Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“It’s really an unprecedented tying of the president’s hands on emergency spending, and he hasn’t made a decision on the designation,” said Amy Call, a spokeswoman for the White House Office of Management and Budget.

But, referring to the \$90 million health-tracking proposal, she added: “We understand there is a need here. That’s why we’ve already set up these two programs.”



Mrs. Clinton’s appeal came on a day when she attended the formal opening of the World Trade Center worker and volunteer medical screening program at Mount Sinai Medical Center on the Upper East Side. She was joined by elected officials like Representative Jerrold L. Nadler, Democrat of Manhattan, and labor leaders.

For the next 18 months, the \$12 million program is expected to screen up to 8,500 people involved in the rescue and recovery operations at ground zero, the Fresh Kills landfill or other areas.

But with so little certain about how hazardous the air might have been in the weeks after Sept. 11, officials say that up to 30,000 people may be afflicted with health problems—hence the push for \$90 million more, which officials say would finance regular health examinations for up to 20 years.

“We know very well thousands and thousands of workers and volunteers were exposed to hazardous materials,” Mrs. Clinton said. “Each one of these people is owed our debt and gratitude.”

The clinic has been open on a limited basis for about a month. And of the 40 people who first scheduled appointments, about half still reported having health problems like asthma, bronchitis and “the most irritated nasal passages I’ve ever seen in my life,” said Dr. Robin Herbert, the program’s co-director.

One worker who had an appointment yesterday, Alexis Hardy, said that he and his colleagues from Verizon who had worked to repair phone and cable lines had all complained of the same ailments for months: coughing and a soreness in the throat.