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September 25, 2023

Elizabeth Ward, PhD
Chair
World Trade Center Health Program Scientific/Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

Dear Dr. Ward:

Thank you for your letter of June 23, 2023, regarding the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program's plans for establishing a Youth Research Cohort. Continued advice from the STAC throughout this effort is an essential part of ensuring rigorous health effects research involving this vulnerable population. As the Administrator of the WTC Health Program, I am committed to careful consideration of STAC input. Three areas of STAC advice are addressed below:

1. I acknowledge that the project timeline and available resources are areas of concern. The Program will balance timeliness of cohort inception with integration of community input and application of sound scientific methods.
2. The STAC emphasized ensuring effective communications and, generally, the need for broad outreach. I agree that a comprehensive plan for outreach should be implemented to raise public awareness of the potential benefits of participating in the current Program, as well as the future research cohort. For the latter, broad outreach is needed in both cohort development and recruitment. This outreach will likely involve concepts born out of collaboration with partners, including researchers who have conducted studies of WTC childhood exposures, community organizations in the New York City area, as well as national organizations and other programs involved in youth research.
3. I acknowledge that the STAC supported including persons in the Youth Research Cohort who may have received 9/11-exposure while *in utero*. The Program is currently exploring this issue.

I appreciate your ongoing leadership of the WTC Health Program STAC and the commitment of the Committee members.

Sincerely,

John Howard, M.D.
Administrator, World Trade Center Health Program