

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write regarding the upcoming expiration of Dr. John Howard's term as Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Administrator of the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP).

Support for the World Trade Center Health Program remains one of the strongest bipartisan commitments in Congress. The WTCHP provides critical medical monitoring and treatment services to more than 140,000 9/11 responders and survivors across all 50 states and in 434 of 435 congressional districts.

Congress recently reaffirmed that commitment by ensuring that the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2026, signed into law by President Trump, permanently addressed the WTCHP's projected funding shortfall and provided the resources necessary to operate without interruption through 2040. As we approach the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of September 11, this action delivered long-overdue certainty to responders and survivors nationwide.

We also appreciate the steps you and your Department have recently taken to address concerns regarding staffing shortages, delayed research grants, and pending petitions related to additional covered conditions. We look forward to continued progress on these issues.

We write today to respectfully urge you to reappoint Dr. Howard to another six-year term before the 25th anniversary of September 11.

Under the James Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, the NIOSH Director serves as Administrator of the World Trade Center Health Program. Dr. Howard has served in those roles with distinction for more than two decades, having first been appointed by Secretary Tommy Thompson in 2002 and most recently reappointed by Secretary Alex Azar during President Trump's first administration.

Throughout administrations of both parties, Dr. Howard has earned the trust and confidence of Congress, the 9/11 community, healthcare providers, researchers, and WTCHP staff. His leadership has provided continuity, stability, and institutional knowledge throughout the federal government's response to the long-term health consequences of the September 11 attacks.

From the earliest monitoring efforts following the attacks to the creation and growth of the World Trade Center Health Program, Dr. Howard has been a steady and effective leader. His tenure has helped ensure continuity of care, consistency in WTCHP administration, and confidence among Program participants across the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Shanksville communities.

As the WTCHP enters a new chapter with funding secured through 2040, maintaining experienced leadership is especially important. Reappointing Dr. Howard would provide stability for Program participants, providers,

researchers, and staff while reinforcing the federal government's enduring commitment to those who continue to live with the health consequences of 9/11.

We believe that reappointing Dr. Howard before the upcoming anniversary would send a powerful message of continued support for 9/11 responders and survivors and help ensure a seamless transition into the WTCHP's next phase.

Accordingly, we respectfully urge you to reappoint Dr. Howard to another six-year term as Director of NIOSH and Administrator of the World Trade Center Health Program as soon as practicable.

Sincerely,



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Andrew R. Garbarino  
Member of Congress



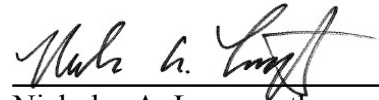
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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



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Laura A. Gillen  
Member of Congress



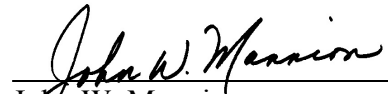
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Nicholas A. Langworthy  
Member of Congress



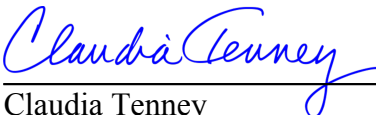
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Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



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John W. Mannion  
Member of Congress



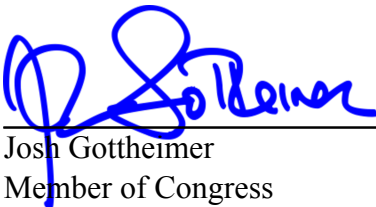
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Claudia Tenney  
Member of Congress



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Nicole Malliotakis  
Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

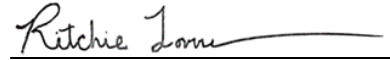


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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



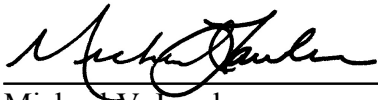
Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



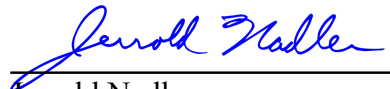
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress



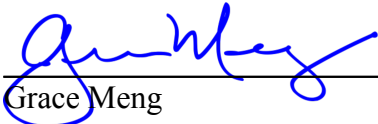
Thomas H. Kean, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Grace Meng  
Member of Congress



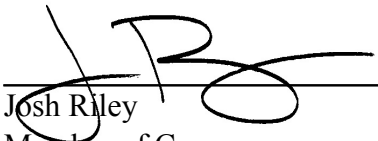
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



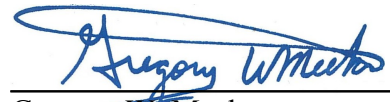
Nick LaLota  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



Josh Riley  
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew  
Member of Congress



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Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator



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Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress