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Friday, November 02, 2001

Mr. Richard Mendelson, Area Director  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
Manhattan Area Office  
201 Varick Street, Room 646  
New York, NY 10014

Re: NYU Downtown Hospital  
Follow up on Complaints No. 203797899

Dear Mr. Mendelson:

First, let me begin by saying I was glad to hear that you survived this terrible tragedy, which has affected all of our lives. I am sure the impact of relocating your offices has been a major hardship on your staff and organization.

This letter is a follow up regarding the recent complaint letter received by your office concerning employees experiencing symptoms such as sore throats, rashes, cold sores and coughing as a result of dust throughout the hospital. As you may know, NYU Downtown Hospital is located just five (5) blocks from the World Trade Center site, and was seriously impacted and affected by the attack on September 11<sup>th</sup>. I am proud to say that our staff triaged and treated over 320 seriously injured victims during the first and only wave of patients. In addition, the Hospital opened our doors to over 500 people seeking refuge from dust and debris after the collapse of both towers. Afterwards, the Hospital remained fully operational treating over 170 firefighters and rescue workers suffering from various injuries in their attempts to find survivors, while the Hospital was operating on emergency power from our generator and without telephones. Throughout this entire tragedy and since thereafter, one of our greatest concerns has been air quality, not only for our staff, but more importantly for our patients.

Please let me assure you that NYU Downtown Hospital has taken every precaution to ensure a safe environment of care for our patients and staff, including addressing the poor air quality throughout Lower Manhattan and the air quality within the Hospital. Immediately following the influx of patients, our Housekeeping Department with the assistance of outside custodial contractors began the huge task of cleaning the Hospital. We relied heavily on following the recommendations of our environmental consultants, CTSI who were onsite September 13<sup>th</sup> to properly assess the air quality both outside and inside the Hospital. They made a number of recommendations, including engineering controls to keep dust from entering the Hospital. These included installing wet walk-off mats both outside and inside the main entrances of the Hospital. In addition, they recommended using HEPA vacuums and wet-cleaning all surfaces.

The Engineering Department replaced all pre and bag filters, and washed the heating and cooling coils on each air handling unit, before returning them to normal operation, which was nearly a

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week later, since many of the HVAC Units are not fed from the emergency generator. In addition, the Engineering Department has also installed two (2) additional filter media on all air intakes to the Hospital. The first filters air before entering the Hospital's indoor air plenums. The second filter media is activated charcoal, and is installed over each air damper before entering the air handling unit. As a result this action has significantly reduced the number of internal filter changes for each of the Hospital's air handlers, while ensuring odor control and additional air filtration of the outside air.

The Engineering Department has also procured three (3) large HEPA portable air scrubbers, capable of cleaning over 2,500 cubic feet per minute. Two of these have been installed inside our entrance vestibules to control dust entering the facility. Another air scrubber, along with smaller HEPA air cleaners, have been located in critical areas throughout the Hospital.

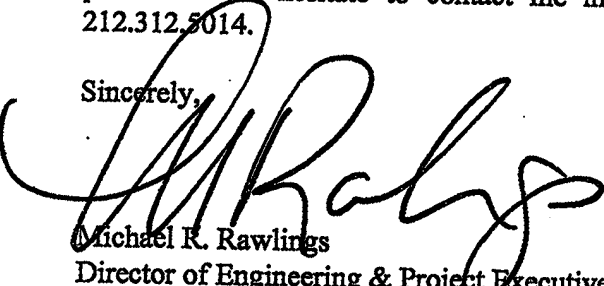
Our environmental consultants began performing air quality tests, measuring both dust levels and asbestos levels within and outside the Hospital. The test results meet or exceed OSHA and EPA guidelines for dust and asbestos. Representatives of NYU School of Medicine's Department of Environmental Medicine began on September 12<sup>th</sup>, and will continue for sometime, taking outside air quality readings for a National Institute of Health grant studying air quality and the impact on 'Environmental Health Issues Related to the World Trade Center Disaster'.

Immediately after speaking with your office on October 29<sup>th</sup>, I conducted a walk-through investigation of the entire Hospital with Adrianna Fargelli, our Director of Housekeeping. We did not observe any signs of poor housekeeping, build up or collection of dust in any of our clinical or non-clinical area, and the filters on the Hospital's air handling units were clean, with no signs of overloading.

Attached you will find detailed air quality, monitoring reports, and presentations from CTSI, the hospital's environmental consultant, Lawrence B. Malloy, a consultant for an off site property in which the hospital leases approximately 17,000 GSF at 100 William Street, and NYU School of Medicine's Department of Environmental Medicine. Please feel free to review these reports, concerning both indoor and outdoor air quality.

I hope this information is helpful in addressing this matter. If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact me in the Engineering Office at NYU Downtown Hospital at 212.312.5014.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Rawlings  
Director of Engineering & Project Executive

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Attached

Cc: Leonard Aubrey, President/CEO (w/o attachments)  
Paul Yellin, MD – Sr. VP & Chief of Medicine (w/o attachments)  
Krys Candelaria, RN – Sr. VP Patient Operations/CNO (w/o attachments)  
William Lee, VP Human Resources (w/o attachments)  
Debra Schron, Chief of Pathology & Chair of the Environment of Care Committee (w/o attachments)  
Michael Barbarito, Associate Director of Safety (w/o attachments)

# CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

## OSHA NOTIFICATION OF ALLEGED HAZARD(S)

OSHA Case No. 2001-7899

Date of Posting:

10/31/2001

US DOL OSHA MAD

PAGE 04/04

Date Copy Given to:

Employee Representative:

10/31/2001

# CERTIFICATE OF POSTING

On behalf of the employer, I certify that a copy of the complaint letter received from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has been posted in a conspicuous place where all affected employees will have notice, or near such location where the violation occurred, and such notice has been given to each authorized representative of affected employees, if any. This notice was or will be posted for a minimum of ten (10) working days or until any hazardous conditions found are corrected.

OSHA Case No. 2001-7899

Michael R. Rawlings  
Director of Engineering  
& Project Executive

Employee Representative:

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