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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2002

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CRAIN'S HEALTH pulse

A daily fax on the business of health care

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R. AMIELE

TODAY'S NEWS

MENTAL HEALTH DEAL

New York Hospital Queens and Choices Mental Health Center have signed an agreement likely to increase outpatient mental health referrals to Choices from the hospital's three ambulatory clinics. The partnership is a first for Long Island City-based Choices and fills a gap for NYHQ, which stopped offering outpatient mental health services last year. While the agreement merely makes referrals easier, Choices may soon place staff in the clinics as part of a program paid for by Project Liberty, under a Federal Emergency Management Agency grant designed to pay for mental health counseling following the Sept. 11 attack.

MEDICARE REFORM

The Manhattan-based Medicare Rights Center is pushing for more consumer representation on Health and Human Services' new advisory committee on regulatory reform. Of the committee's 27 members, 24 represent providers, insurers and the government. Also, the three consumer representatives are closely associated with provider interests, MRC says. MRC is promoting access to quality

PULSE EXTRA: Today's edition looks at health needs in the residential areas most affected by the WTC attack.

Businesses oppose health care deal

The state business council says that Gov. Pataki's \$30 billion health proposal will impose unacceptable burdens on the economy. The Senate has been backing the measure; the Assembly was expected to pass it last night or early today.

The group argues that a key provision—giving hospitals hundreds of millions of dollars to raise workers' salaries—builds in higher costs that will remain long after the initial funding has run out. The business council is also turning over a new 39-cent-per-pack cigarette tax, which, the group says, will increase net revenues by a mere \$75 million because it will lead

to more bootlegging and tax evasion.

Consumer groups are also unhappy. While they applaud provisions that would simplify the Medicaid application process and suspend further Medicaid cuts, they continue to argue that all the money from an Empire Blue Cross Blue Shield public offering should be given to a foundation that would work to increase access to health care for the poorest New Yorkers. At deadline, the foundation was slated to get only 5% of the Empire stock.

"The idea that a charitable asset will go from 100% to 5% is really distressing," says Mark Scherzer of New Yorkers for Accessible Health Care.

health care for low-income individuals, senior citizens, children, pregnant women, the disabled and immigrants.

WTC FALLOUT

Roughly half the residents in three of the biggest residential areas in lower Manhattan reported physical ailments likely caused by inhaling smoke following the Sept. 11 attack, and almost 40% reported symptoms suggesting post-traumatic stress disorder, according to a survey by the city Department of Health. The survey also found a serious need for education and services: Many residents did not know how to properly clean their

apartments of attack debris, and a majority had not received counseling. For details on the survey, see today's *Pulse Extra*.

AT A GLANCE

MENTAL HEALTH CAMPAIGN: The city departments of health and mental health have launched a campaign, with the tagline "New York Needs Us Strong," to invite those affected by the WTC disaster to take advantage of free counseling and referral services. Posters feature messages by New Yorkers describing how they have been coping. The campaign is underwritten by a \$14 million FEMA grant.

WOMEN'S HEALTH PENINSULA HOSPITAL CENTER

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FOR INFORMATION
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pulse

A special report on health care in New York

Extra

After Sept. 11, the New York City Department of Health's Community HealthWorks bureau, the National Center for Environmental Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention assessed the health needs in the three residential areas that were most directly affected by the WTC attack: Battery Park City, Southbridge Towers and Independence Plaza. A total of 414 interviews were completed between Oct. 25 and Nov. 1. This week's *Pulse Extra* details the survey.

POPULATION SURVEYED

	Battery Park City	Southbridge Towers	Independence Plaza	Total
Population estimates	8,000	2,000	2,300	12,300
Percent of households evacuated	86.9%	44.0%	60.7%	66.7%
Average days evacuated	21	8	8	14
Average number of residents per occupied household	1.8	2.0	1.9	1.8
AGE				
Average	40.8	58.0	52.7	50.8
18-44	84.3%	28.4%	28.2%	40.8%
45-65	32.2%	32.3%	49.1%	36.9%
66 and older	3.5%	39.4%	22.7%	22.3%
Percent female	51.7%	65.8%	58.0%	58.9%
Percent employed at time of attack	78.8%	42.3%	62.2%	60.4%

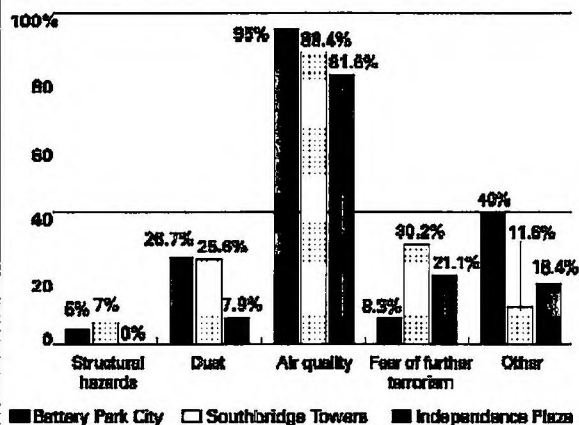
COUNSELING NEEDS

Organized by post-traumatic stress disorder score*

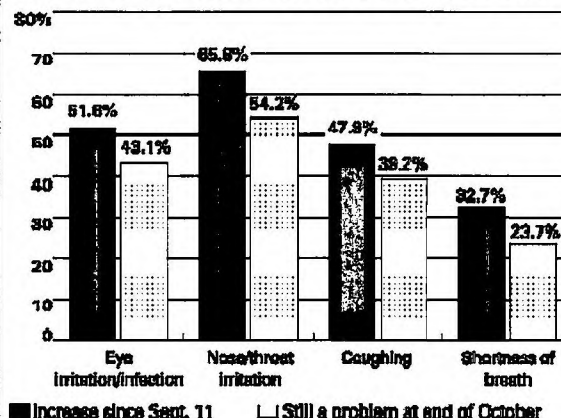
PTSD score	Total (414)	Below 44 (253)	44 and above (161)
Received supportive counseling	27.6% (113/410)	20.3% (51/251)	39.0% (62/159)
Would benefit from any or additional supportive counseling	35.8% (147/411)	25.6% (64/250)	51.6% (83/161)
Would benefit from additional counseling, and lacked adequate access to such counseling	34.5% (51/148)	22.2% (14/63)	43.5% (37/85)

*A score of 44 or above suggests post-traumatic stress disorder, and may indicate a need for mental health evaluation.

CONCERNS FOR HOME SAFETY



REPORTED SYMPTOMS SINCE SEPT. 11



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