

Redacted letter

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Submitter name
Jennifer Lee

Jennifer Lee

[REDACTED]
Union City, NJ [REDACTED]

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c/o Sherri Diana
NIOSH Docket Office
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
1090 Tusculum Avenue, MS C-34
Cincinnati, Ohio 45226

I urge the World Trade Center Health program to include uterine cancer on the list of WTC-Related Conditions.

I submit to you my personal story and struggle with uterine cancer to illustrate the challenge for women like myself and to provide a reasonable basis for recommending inclusion. I am just one story, but I know I am not alone.

I was diagnosed with uterine cancer at age 65. I have since had a total hysterectomy. I have no family history and no known risk factors...other than of course the fact I meet the minimum exposure criteria developed by the World Trade Center Health Program (WTCHP), which as far as I understand means either caught in the dust cloud or at least 400 hours between September 11, 2001 and July 31, 2002 (the exposure period).

I worked at the New York Stock Exchange during the exposure period. On September 11, 2001, I was caught in the dust cloud – covered from head to toe. Dust was in my mouth, my clothes, my hair, my eyes. It was everywhere. The phrase “never forget” is most often associated with this horrible day. I couldn’t forget that moment, or the smell, or the taste, or the feeling if I try to. Just over a week later I returned to work with the clearance by the Environmental Protection Agency that the air was safe to breathe. I continued to work at the New York Stock Exchange full-time through July 31, 2002 (and continuing through 2013). In addition to being caught in the dust cloud, I spent well over 1600 hours in and around the New York Stock Exchange during the exposure period.

Since I am not a responder, I am ineligible for the WTCHP because I do not have any recognized conditions. I do have cancer. I do meet the minimum exposure duration requirements. My diagnosis does meet the minimum latency criteria. Yet, because I have uterine cancer, and not a uterine sarcoma or pretty much any other type of cancer, I am not recognized as a survivor and my cancer is not recognized as related to 9/11.

It is difficult for me to believe that uterine cancer is so fundamentally different than every other type of cancer, and from a uterine sarcoma, such that I should be denied access to care, research, and closure. My diagnosis left me in shock. In searching for answers, I found out some of my co-workers with similar exposure had also been diagnosed with cancer and that it had been linked to 9/11. After months of struggling to understand how I could have developed uterine cancer, learning about my friends' diagnoses at least helped me to gain some closure...until I felt a renewed sense of shock in learning that uterine cancer is not considered related to 9/11 toxins exposure.

I want uterine cancer to be recognized so I can not only feel justice and vindication, but also to gain access to healthcare and research. However, this is not just for me. I have a daughter. I know young women were exposed to the same dust that I was exposed to. I know they, and their parents, relied on the promise that the air was safe to breathe. I want them to be aware of the fact their exposure may cause the same cancer that I battled with. I want them to have access to 9/11-focused healthcare sooner than I will hopefully have access to it..

Thank you to WTC Health Program Administrator John Howard for taking it upon himself to review uterine cancer for recognition after two failed public petitions, and to the STAC for allowing public commentary. I hope my story can serve as a case study as to why there is a reasonable basis to recognize uterine cancer. I trust that you will make the right decision.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Lee