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NIOSH Docket Office
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To the Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of my mother, Haydee Cleary, who passed away from endometrial cancer after volunteering with the Salvation Army at the World Trade Center recovery site after September 11th. For several months, my mother and I worked side by side, serving food and providing support in the large white tent, nicknamed, "The Taj." It was a profound experience to share with my mom, and we both felt privileged to be able to contribute to the recovery effort in our small way. We could not have imagined the price that she would later pay.

In May, 2007, only seven months after my father's death from colon cancer, my mother received a diagnosis of early Stage 1 endometrial cancer. She had a radical hysterectomy and we felt lucky and hopeful that she would be fine due to the early detection. However, eighteen months later, the cancer was back. Her doctors were mystified, given that the original cancer had not penetrated the uterine wall and thus should not have been able to spread after the hysterectomy. As he had during her original diagnosis, her oncologist pointed to her time at the WTC site as a likely cause of her cancer, especially given its unpredictable and aggressive nature. We tried chemotherapy and radiation for a year, but she lost her fight on February 7, 2010, less than three years after her original diagnosis. In 2013, her name was added to the Responders Remembered Wall in Nesconset, Long Island.

After suffering asthma and fertility issues after my time at the WTC site, I finally decided to enroll in the WTC Health Program. At the same time, I inquired about whether my mother would be entitled to recognition and a death benefit through the Victim's Compensation Fund. I was shocked to find out that, while other reproductive cancers are covered, endometrial cancer is not.

I could not wrap my head around the fact that I was basically being told that, despite her sacrifices, my mother had simply contracted the "wrong" cancer. And I could not stop thinking about all of the women who had also given so much of themselves to help after 9/11, and how

it must feel for them to be told that their cancer does not count, that their heroism and sacrifice does not count. These women need our help, and if my mom was still with us, she would say the same thing. Not only do these women need medical coverage, but they also need to be shown that their contribution matters and that we all recognize what they have endured as a result of their efforts to help their country heal after the atrocities of 9/11.

My daughters never knew their grandparents, which is truly the greatest regret of my life. I keep my parents' spirits alive for them as best I can, but it will never be the same. They will never have the chance to spend holidays and birthdays together, or even just to sit together and read a book.

Every year, on September 11th, we visit a local memorial here in Tampa, which includes a plaque for the responders who have died. I remind my daughters that their grandmother is one of those people who made the ultimate sacrifice for her country. I would love to be able to tell them that her country recognizes that fact too.

Thank you for allowing me the time to share our story. I know that the committee will make the right decision.

Sincerely,

Kristen Marée Cleary