



A Message from Special Master Rupa Bhattacharyya

March 13, 2017

Dear Friends,

Today, the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (“VCF” or “Fund”) publishes its [Fifth Annual Status Report](#) and the first Annual Reassessment of Policies and Procedures required under the terms of the Reauthorized Zadroga Act, Pub. L. No. 114-113 (Dec. 18, 2015). The publication of this report caps off an eventful year in the history of the Fund, which brought major changes and significant successes.

I am very pleased with the accomplishments made in the last year, but, as always, I recognize that there is much work that remains to be done and that many of those who suffer as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attacks continue to wait for compensation. I strongly believe that the accomplishments of 2016, as the VCF implemented the reauthorization statute, issued updated regulations, revised the claim form and online claims system, clarified policies and procedures, enhanced its staffing, reinforced its partnerships, implemented a priority system for deciding claims, and paid full compensation to more than 9,000 Group A claimants and nearly 2,500 Group B claimants totaling nearly \$2.27 billion (including more than 800 of the oldest claims submitted), have laid the foundation for even greater success in 2017.

It is also with great pleasure that I take this opportunity to announce the appointment of Jordana (“Jordy”) H. Feldman as Deputy Special Master. Many of you know Jordy as the Director of the New York Office, which she will remain. Jordy has been with the VCF from its very beginning and has been integral to its accomplishments and successes since it was established in 2001. She is instrumental to the establishment and maintenance of our many partnerships with the New York state and local entities that employed many of our claimants and provide much of the information necessary to our claim review process; she is a critical liaison with the World Trade Center (“WTC”) Health Program; she spearheads our appellate process; and she has always been an indispensable part of my leadership team. I am very excited to have Jordy step into this new role and Deputy Special Master Stefanie Langsam and I are confident that she will greatly enhance our efforts at speed, accuracy, fairness, and transparency. You can read more about Jordy and her role on the VCF [here](#).

Our priority in 2017 remains, as always, the processing of claims, continuing to focus on issuing determinations on the oldest claims first. Much needs to be done. As the Annual Status Report details, as of December 31, 2016, more than 3,200 compensation claims are currently in review where eligibility has been approved. Another 2,700 are awaiting eligibility review prior to beginning compensation review. Of these, nearly 2,500 had compensation submitted in 2015 or earlier. These 2,500 claims, which have now been pending for at least two years, are my next priority. While this is a significant number of claims, and nearly 75% are the more complex economic loss claims which take more time to decide, I am committed to doing our best to decide these claims this year. We also have nearly 800 compensation amendments that were submitted in 2015 or earlier. While we continue to prioritize the review of claims for claimants who have not received any award over those claimants who have already received some compensation, we have a small team dedicated to processing amendments, working them in priority based on the date the amendment was filed.

As you know, our goal for 2016 was to render determinations on compensation claims for eligible claimants that were submitted over two years ago, as of August 1, 2016, where we had received all the



information needed to evaluate the claim. We have now completed 95% of these claims, which I view as a major step forward. Our focus in the coming year is on reducing the length of time it takes to render a decision on a claim once the claim form and all required supporting documents are submitted. I am also committed to reducing the length of time that it takes for appeals decisions to be issued once a hearing is held, and continuing to ensure an appeals process that is fair, efficient, and non-adversarial. We are also planning a substantial outreach effort in 2017 to try and reach potentially eligible individuals who are not aware of the program or their potential eligibility for the program. And finally, we will continue to work closely with our partners, such as the WTC Health Program, to ensure we are doing everything possible to support those whose lives were forever changed by the events of September 11, 2001.

I look forward to continuing to keep you updated on our progress, and I am very grateful for the support and patience that all of you have shown in my first eight months as Special Master. It is my privilege and honor to work with the talented and dedicated VCF staff and to continue to serve this community.

As always, if you have questions about the VCF claims process, I encourage you to call our toll-free Helpline at 1-855-885-1555. For the hearing impaired, please call 1-855-885-1558 (TDD). If you are calling from outside the United States, please call 1-202-514-1100.

Best regards,
Rupa