# STATE OF NEW YORK

7416

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

# IN ASSEMBLY

March 25, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. SANTABARBARA -- read once and referred to the Committee on Health

AN ACT to amend the state finance law, in relation to enacting the "9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access act"; to establish the 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access act task force; and making an appropriation therefor

**The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:**

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access act".

§ 2. The state finance law is amended by adding a new section 99-ss to read as follows:

**§ 99-ss. The 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access fund. 1. There is hereby established in the joint custody of the state comptroller and the commissioner of health a special fund to be known as the 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access fund.**

**2. Such fund shall consist of all moneys appropriated thereto from any other fund or source pursuant to law. Nothing contained in this section shall prevent the state from receiving grants, gifts or bequests for the purposes of the fund as defined in this section and depositing them into the fund according to law.**

**3. The monies of the fund, after annual appropriation by the legislature, shall be available to the commissioner of health for distribution, through an application process to be determined by the commissioner of health, to 9/11 first responders and survivors for medical treatments, prescriptions, and essential care services when:**

**(a) a federal claim is delayed;**

**(b) a federal benefit is under appeal; and**

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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(c) an urgent health-related need arises while awaiting federal response.

4. On or before January first of each year, the department of health shall provide a written report detailing how the monies of the fund were utilized during the preceding fiscal year. Such report shall be provided to the temporary president of the senate, the speaker of the assembly, the chair of the senate finance committee, the chair of the assembly ways and means committee, the chair of the senate committee on health, the chair of the assembly health committee, and the state comptroller. Such report shall be posted on the department of health's website and shall include:

(a) the amount of money available and disbursed from the fund over the previous twelve months; and

(b) a description on how such monies were used.

5. For the purposes of this section, "9/11 first responders and survivors" shall mean:

(a) those individuals who participated in World Trade Center rescue, recovery or cleanup operations as such term is defined in section two of the retirement and social security law; and

(b) those individuals who lived and worked within the World Trade Center site as such term is defined in section two of the retirement and social security law.

§ 3. 1. A 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access act task force is hereby created which shall consist of the following nine members:

(a) two members from the assembly appointed by the speaker of assembly;

(b) two members from the senate appointed by the temporary president of the senate;

(c) one representative from the department of health appointed by the governor;

(d) one representative from the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program appointed by the governor;

(e) one representative from the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) appointed by the governor;

(f) one medical professional with expertise in 9/11-related health conditions appointed by the governor; and

(g) one advocate representing 9/11 first responders and survivors appointed by the governor.

2. The task force shall:

(a) monitor the administration of health care benefits and ensure that funding from the 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access fund established pursuant to section 99-ss of the state finance law is allocated appropriately and promptly;

(b) investigate delays and disruptions in healthcare access for eligible 9/11 responders and survivors;

(c) make policy recommendations to the legislature and governor on improving healthcare access and funding mechanisms;

(d) oversee data collection on healthcare outcomes and access issues to inform future policy decisions; and

(e) submit annual reports to the legislature and governor detailing the task force's findings, recommendations, and an evaluation of the program's effectiveness.

§ 4. The sum of five million dollars ($5,000,000), or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the 9/11 first responders and survivors' emergency healthcare access fund as established pursuant

to section 99-ss of the state finance law from any moneys in the state treasury not otherwise appropriated and made immediately available to the department of health for the purposes of carrying out the provisions of this act. Such moneys shall be payable on the audit and warrant of the comptroller on vouchers certified or approved by the commissioner of health in the manner prescribed by law.

§ 5. This act shall take effect April 1, 2026.