



**DEPARTMENT OF EPIDEMIOLOGY • George T. Loo, MPA, MPH**  
Principal Investigator/Project Director

**MENTAL HEALTH SURVEY AMONG FEDERAL DISASTER WORKERS – MHC study**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this mental health survey. This study is intended to ascertain the mental health consequences of exposure to traumatic events such as terror attacks and natural disasters in federal disaster workers. Your responses to the questions should help us understand how exposure to terror attacks and disasters may influence the psychological well being of our unique organization. Your responses will aid in determining if there are differences between terrorism and natural disaster exposures; if repeated exposures have any association; and finally how do we cope with these events. I realize that the questionnaire turned out to be longer than we expected, but I hope that your patience will be rewarded in knowing that the information you provide will directly affect this important aspect of health among our nation's disaster responders. The findings of this study may be used to guide the planning and implementation of programs designed to mitigate these consequences.

To ensure anonymity in the data collection, analysis, presentation and/or publication of the results of this survey, no personal identifiers will be asked of you in the survey. Additionally, no signed consent form will be used since this will leave a document with an identifier. Instead your participation in the internet survey which is hosted by SurveyMonkey.com using a SSL encrypted connection will serve as implied consent. The study has been approved by the Columbia University-IRB and the DHHS-OGC and no personnel information/address has been disseminated.

Your responses to the survey will provide the data necessary to highlight the mental health conditions of this nation's disaster responders. The data will also be used to satisfy the requirements of a doctoral dissertation in epidemiology to be conducted by myself, George Loo. Some of you may know me as I am a member of DMAT-NY2. I have been working the last several months with Dr. Charles DiMaggio, Dr. Sandro Galea, Dr. Stephen Morse and Dr. Robyn Gershon who are Columbia University faculty with expertise in this field and will be members of the dissertation committee. Also serving as a member of the dissertation committee is Capt. David Canton, USPHS, Chief Medical Officer of the NDMS.

Participation is voluntary. Some of you may find the questionnaire sensitive and may wish not to reply. However your participation is strongly encouraged and your reply within two weeks would be greatly appreciated. Your responses will improve the quality of the data collected by providing information that is a broad representative sample of the mental health status in our organization but, may also benefit all disaster responders in the long term. On behalf of all of us and your fellow NDMS colleagues we thank you for joining us in this endeavor,

If you have any questions or comments about the study, please contact:

George T. Loo, MPH, MPA, EMT-B  
Administrative Specialist, NDMS-DMAT-NY2  
Doctoral Candidate in Epidemiology  
Columbia University - Mailman School of Public Health

722 West 168<sup>th</sup> Street, 7<sup>th</sup> floor, New York, New York 10032  
TEL 212 304 6080 • FAX 212 544 1994 • [www.GTL4@columbia.edu](http://www.GTL4@columbia.edu)