

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) Cited for Non-Assistance to a New York Community in 9/11 Crisis



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Charges of non-assistance to a New York community, post 9/11, in a context of bias and discrimination, were filed with the U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS), the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA), and the New York State Division of Human Rights (NYSDHR).

According to the Verified Complaints, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) ignored repeated requests to assist in the medical and mental health care of French-American residents of New York, and of French tourists trapped by the 9/11 cataclysm.

As official coordinator for the French consular 9/11 crisis task force, Gérard Sunnen, MD, a U.S. veteran and dual national, reported that many individuals were severely distraught and maximally stressed by the 9/11 catastrophe and needed acute and chronic support services. He pointed out that French president Jacques Chirac was the first president of a foreign nation to come to New York after 9/11, offering his nation's condolences and assistance. After his visit, he promptly dispatched French senator Monique Cerisier-ben Guiga to New York to oversee consular humanitarian actions.

"The prejudicial actions of the NYSDOH then reached new heights in the era of freedom fries" as part of a pattern and in a spirit of retribution for France's non-participation in the Iraq conflict. Curiously, nowhere did it ever reach the intensity of New York," reports Dr. Sunnen, "please recall the well-publicized incidents of wine bottles vindictively smashed in the streets, the eggs thrown at the façade of the Consulate of France, and the inflammatory headlines in the New York tabloids during those times. Because of coordinated boycotts, many French-owned businesses failed in New York, creating widespread mental health calamities."

"Consequences of NYSDOH's usage of its powers traveled far beyond New York," said Dr. Sunnen, adding, "We were working with our Egyptian colleagues on two clinical studies, under the auspices of the University of Cairo and the Egyptian Ministry of Health. Both studies aimed at major public health issues in the Middle East and in the U.S., one regarding hepatitis C in Egypt, where the hepatitis C prevalence is by far the highest in the world, and the other on diabetic skin ulcers, a major cause of lower leg amputations worldwide. "

"Due to NYSDOH's interference, the research contracts fell through and the studies were abandoned." Information on the impedance to these international medical research initiatives can be found on the Internet. Legislative attempts designed to curb NYSDOH's oft-reported undemocratic practices were all vetoed by Governor George E. Pataki in 2004.

Dr. Sunnen concluded, "In countering today's tendency for international polarizations, friends and allies need to solidify their ties and cooperative efforts, and there may be nowhere better to start than with actively nurturing medical fellowship and goodwill."

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