

## Testimony of David J. Rapp

Hello committee, members of MT. Sinai, ladies and gentlemen:

Please excuse me, I am a little nervous. My name is David Rapp. I am a construction worker from local 1456, Dock builders District Council of Carpenters. I was at ground zero for a near 5 months, including 3 days of the first week of the terrorist attack. I hope my testimony is going to make everyone aware of what we experienced at ground zero and what I and others are going through now. I viewed, smelt and handled things that you cannot imagine. Although I worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, I looked forward to heading back for another shift. I started experiencing health problems, like dizziness, shortness of breath and skin rashes while I was still working there. Although we accomplished what we set out to do, which was keeping the slurry wall from collapsing as the debris was removed. Our job was installing tie-backs while being exposed to who knows what.

My job was completed in March 2002 at ground zero. I went to my next job at Kennedy airport driving piles for American Airlines where my ability and stamina had diminished. I was layed off the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April and have not worked since. I am a 42 year old dock builder that normally could do as much as a 22 year and more. I could carry a 150 pound tank of oxygen or astatine a half a block through a rough job site, but now I can't even take out my household garbage. I am also an auto mechanic with 5 certifications. After a long day dock building, I could still come home and install a 200 pound transmission on my back from my chest. Now I can't even change a flat tire! There is a lot of fear, I've had several emergency visits and short stays in the hospital. I rely on oxygen to sleep at night, and still wake up sometimes gasping for air while trying to stay calm. Sometimes I feel like I am under water. I've had a sore throat for 15 months, when I cough I can feel the outlines of my lungs. I have to sleep in a recliner straight up and I can't go out in the humidity or the cold weather. I need to keep my house temperature near 65 degrees, while my wife sleeps with a quilt. I am on steroids which have caused weight gain. I have put on 50 pounds since I stopped working in April 2002. Which probably doesn't help my condition at all, but the steroids do help. I am on 12 different other medications plus 3 types of inhalers and I carry an oxygen tank wherever I go for assistance to breath. I can't tell you how hard it is living like this. The fear of not being able to get my next breath is unbearable. I am going to 2 different doctors at this time. 1 is doctor Leo and Marc Parnes and the other is MT. Sinai Health for Hero's.

MT. Sinai has been great to me. They have been helping me since November 2002. They helped me with getting immediate benefits from workers compensation, financially and most important, my medications that I rely on to breath. All of their staff are compassionate and express real concern for my future. They are always making sure I have more then enough medication. Some of the staff even gave me their personal numbers and told I can call any time, even if I just needed someone to talk to. And I do. I would like to end this with I have a beautiful wife of 27 years and 2 sons in their 20's that fear for my future as well. Thank you very much.