



Summer 2024

Responder Newsletter

**Stony Brook World Trade Center (WTC)
Health and Wellness Program**

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Make Your Appointment Today!
Call to schedule at (631) 855-1200

Letter from Dr. Luft



Greetings and Happy Summer!

It's that time of year for BBQ's, vacations and swimming pools! I hope you all get to enjoy some quality time with your friends and families. However, if you feel alone or are going through a tough time, reach out to our case management program. We will try our hardest to help you.

We've made some great progress with our oral history project. In May some of us went to visit the Library of Congress to meet with staff and discuss our interviews. It looks like they will be accessible online by September 2025. Remember, you can still tell your story. We are especially interested in narratives that detail the long-term medical, psychiatric and social effects of the terrorist attack on 9/11. Please contact Camile Arnone, Communications Coordinator at 631-855-1200 to discuss an interview if you are interested.

I wanted to remind all of you that we have an open house open on September 11th from 10am to 3pm, no appointment is necessary. Please feel free to join our staff and fellow responders for comradery, friendship and support if needed.

I want to wish you all an enjoyable summer. Stay cool and stay healthy!

Benjamin J. Luft, MD
Director, World Trade Center Health and Wellness Program

Come Visit Us on September 11th



We will be open on September 11th, 2024.

Please feel free to stop by our Commack clinic to visit with our WTC staff and fellow responders.

Time: 10AM - 3PM

Location: Commack Clinic

500 Commack Road, Suite 160, Commack, NY 11725

Refreshments will be provided.
No RSVP or appointment required.



Updates on Our Oral History Project

Our Visit to The Library of Congress

The Remembering 9/11 Oral History Project has interviewed over 450 9/11 responders, survivors, and family members.

We have partnered with the American Folklife Center at The Library of Congress, so that the story of 9/11, told by those who were there, is preserved for future generations.

This spring, we met with the staff of the American Folklife Center. We succeeded in our goal to get the Oral History Project featured on their digital collections page by the end of the year, and make full interviews accessible online by September 2025.



We need your help to document one of the most significant events in American history, and its consequences.

Not only are we looking for the unique recollections of responders, we also deem it important to include the perspective of family members of 9/11 responders & survivors.

For more information, contact:
Camile Amone, Communications Coordinator:
Camile.Amone@stonybrookmedicine.edu
(631) 855-1200
(When prompted, say, "Camile")



American Folklife Reading Room

Member Spotlight

Pat Burke NYPD Officer Liason

What Was Your Role on 9/11?

"I was a uniform member of the NYPD assigned to Patrol Borough Queens North Crime Prevention Unit. I had several assignments on and after September 11, 2001. As a liaison, I helped coordinate rescue, recovery, and relief efforts with various government agencies, local authorities, and city units across the five boroughs. When 9/11 happened, I was in the borough office and the phones started ringing off the hook. My commanding officer had me place log books at each phone and I began answering as many calls as I could. This helped to start the coordination of the rescue, recovery, and relief effort. My unit organized a staging area with the NY Mets at Shea Stadium. It was amazing. People came in to help in many unique ways: L.L. Bean donated 200 pairs of boots, shirts and socks; Outback Steakhouse and many, many others brought in food; and Home Depot delivered trucks of tools. A young firefighter and his search-and-rescue dog hitchhiked all the way to from Pennsylvania to Queens to help at Ground Zero. It was my job to help him get home. I interviewed members of the service, workers, and the families and children of victims. The sadness and goodness were extreme.

In the days immediately following the aftermath of the attacks, as part of the World Trade Center rescue, recovery, and relief operations, members of the unit escorted the NY Mets and other dignitaries to visit every victim patient in every hospital.

We supported each other as these victims told us the details of their terrifying stories. To recall just one moving memory of many: one victim was a Port Authority Police Officer who I knew from JFK. He was alongside a NYC firefighter, and both were miraculously rescued. Months later we were able to reunite him with the firemen who had saved his life by helping him escape."

Being a part of the community and expressing gratitude is one of Pat's many drivers. She has a strong desire to serve, bring people together, and help her community.

Pat's Battle with Rectal Cancer

Pat was diagnosed with rectal cancer in 2019. She received chemotherapy, radiation, and other treatments. While she is now cancer-free, her health is still an ongoing challenge: she is currently living with disabilities due to the cancer and cancer treatments. It has taken a major toll on her health.

"I want to share my cancer story with everyone, I am not embarrassed about my cancer. I use my experience to help other cancer patients. I get two to three phone calls a week for health advice."



Pat with her dog "Blue" who she is training into a service dog.

Pat's Message to Members

"I want to tell everyone: get screened for everything as often as you can. If you do not get screened, it could be too late. Go routinely for your annual monitoring visit to ensure you receive preventative cancer screenings."

Member Spotlight



What Helped You Cope Post 9/11?

“Being surrounded by family and friends who supported me and took care of me. My friends and husband organized a weekend getaway to Fishers Island with a large group of us. Waking up near the water and in a new environment helped me rest. I remember being outside and seeing this beautiful butterfly bush with 1,000 butterflies — it made me see the beauty of the world again. I realized 9/11 is not the end for me, and that there is more joy to experience in life.”



Pat with her family and swans that she takes care of in her backyard!

What Fills Your Cup?

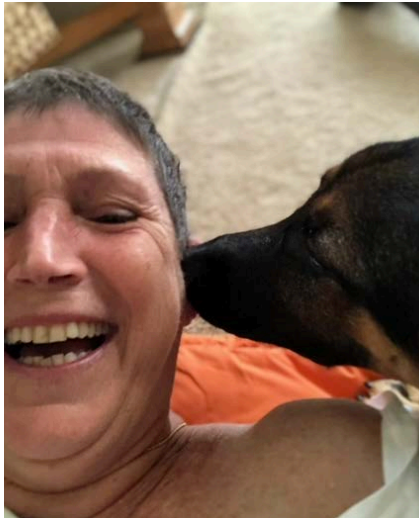
“I love animals and helping others. I volunteer at an equestrian center with Special Needs groups, and I’m involved in community charity organizations that promote awareness for brain-related injury and illnesses. I’m also a veterinary technician. I rescue and rehabilitate injured and ill animals to release back into the wild. I take care of a family of swans and other waterfowl in my backyard. I recently traveled to Ireland where I got to assist a veterinarian with 200 cows, bulls, and calves during calf season. It was an amazing trip and I learned so much. I loved being around the horses and foals, and even enjoyed cleaning the horse stalls!

I have "strong" signs all around my house that helps me get through. It helps me snap out of negative thoughts.”



Pat’s Experience with Mental Health Counseling

“I look forward to going to counseling and I highly recommend it. It’s one of my favorite days of the week now. My doctor helps give substance to what I am experiencing. He has given me different methods to help cope around September every year, including journaling, exercising, being a part of my community, eating properly, and sleeping enough.”

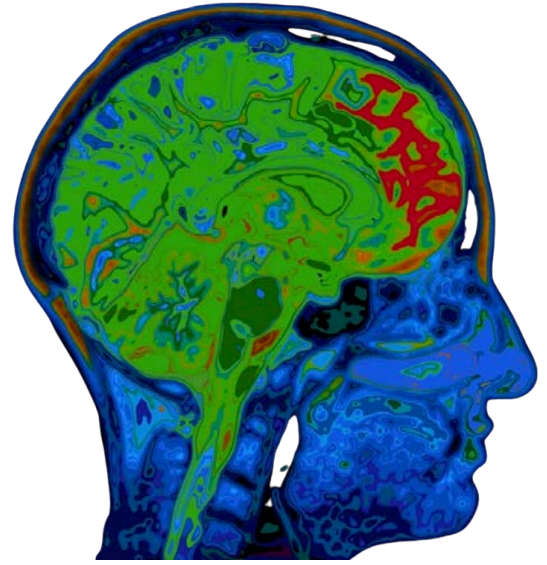


Dr. Luft’s impact on Pat

“I was one of Dr. Luft’s first patients. He was phenomenal, and convinced me to maintain my WTC health care visits. He was so patient, empathetic, and caring. He is the reason I started coming to this program. He is an amazing man and I will forever be grateful to him.”

Long Covid Research

The Stony Brook WTC Health and Wellness Program has been monitoring instances of coronavirus in our responder population since 2020. In doing so, we have received many complaints of long-term symptoms of COVID-19 infection, even still in 2024. In particular, we have heard numerous complaints of brain fog and difficulty concentrating post-COVID-19 infection. This brain fog has caused trouble with daily functioning and short-term memory for many responders, and we are currently researching what could be causing these troubles with a brain imaging study.



This brain imaging study aims to investigate how COVID-19 may have affected the overall health, memories, and brains of our responders. We use MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and PET/MRI (positron emission tomography/magnetic resonance imaging) to capture pictures and 3D renderings of your brain. Once a scan is complete, participants can get a copy of the images on a disk so their doctor can assess how their brain is doing!



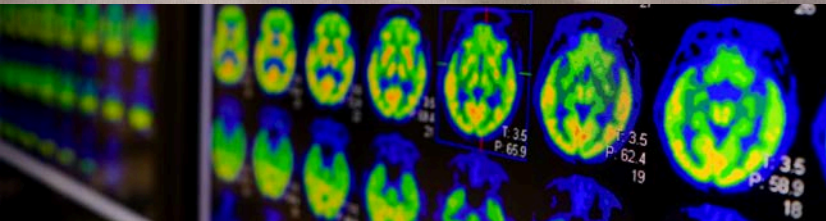
If you think that this study might interest you, **please contact Ashley Fontana**

Phone:

(631) 855-1200

(When prompted, state “member”. Second prompt, state “Ashley or Covid Study”)

Email: Ashley.Fontana@stonybrookmedicine.edu



Responder Patch Wall

Drop off Your Patch at the Commack or Westbury Clinic

or

Mail your patch to the Commack Clinic:

*Attention: Communications Committee
Stony Brook WTC Health & Wellness Program
500 Commack Road, Suite 160
Commack, NY 11725*

1. Attach your first and last name.
2. The name of the organization that your patch is affiliated with.
3. You can write us a brief history/story of your patch, if you want to share!

PATCHES THAT HAVE BEEN DONATED



We are especially in need of representation from these unions. We hope you will consider donating patches:

- IBEW - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
- CEA - Construction Employee Association
- CWA - Communication Workers of America
- IUOE - International Union of Operating Engineers
- IBT - International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- CSEA - Civil Service Employees Association
- TWU - Transport Workers Union
- Ironworkers



ORAL ANTIHISTAMINES EDUCATION

Benefits

Temporarily treats or prevents various symptoms associated with allergic rhinitis including: sneezing, runny nose, itchy throat/nose, itchy, or watery eyes.

How They Work

Antihistamines work by blocking the effects of histamine, a substance released by the immune system when it comes in contact with an allergen.

When to Start Taking

Seasonal allergies are very common in the spring and fall. Start taking them 2-4 weeks before allergy season begins.

Common Oral Antihistamines

	Allegra (Fexofenadine)	Claritin (Loratadine)	Zyrtec (Cetirizine)	Xyzal (Levocetirizine)
				
Most Common Side Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dizziness Headache Back pain Stomach discomfort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Headache 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsiness Tired Dry mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsiness Fatigue Dry mouth
How to take this medication	<p>Take with a full glass of water</p> <p>Do not take at the same time as aluminum and magnesium containing antacids</p>	<p>Take with or without food</p> <p>Take with food if it causes an upset stomach</p>	<p>Take with or without food</p> <p>Take with food if it causes an upset stomach</p>	<p>Take in the evening with or without food</p> <p>Avoid taking with a high-fat meal</p>
Best for treating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congestion Watery Eyes Runny Nose 	Mild Symptoms	All Symptoms	Sneezing
Relief begins in	less than 2 hours	Less than 3 hours	Less than 1 hour	Less than 1 hour
Drug Interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antacids Fruit juice (grapefruit, orange, and apple) Erythromycin Ketoconazole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erythromycin Ketoconazole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No significant interactions
Talk to your health care provider before starting any medication.				

References:

- Claritin [package insert]. Schering Corporation. 2000
- Allegra [package insert]. Sanofi-aventis, LLC. 2007
- Zyrtec [package insert]. Sanofi-aventis, LLC. 2019Xyzal [package insert]. Sanofi-aventis, LLC. 2008.
- Ask the Allergist: Timing Your Allergy Meds | Allergy & Asthma Network (allergyasthmanetwork.org)
- Antihistamines for allergies: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia
- <https://www.claritin.com/products/claritin/tablets-24hr>
- <https://www.zyrtec.com/products>
- <https://www.xyzal.com/en-us/products> · <https://www.allegra.com/en-us/products/allergy-relief/24-hour-allergy-relief>

Featured Recipe

Spinach Quiche with Sweet Potato Crust

Ingredients

- 1 Sweet Potato (sliced into thin rounds)
- 7 Eggs
- 3/4 tsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 3 Garlic (cloves, minced)
- 8 stalks Green Onion (chopped)
- 4 cups Baby Spinach (chopped)
- 1 Tomato (diced)
- Sea Salt & Black Pepper to taste



Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Grease a glass pie plate. Cover the base and sides of the plate with the sweet potato rounds. Layer the rounds until no glass is showing. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, crack eggs into a mixing bowl and whisk well. Set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat. Add in minced garlic and green onions. Sauté for 3 to 5 minutes. Add in chopped spinach and sauté just until wilted. Remove from heat.
4. Add the spinach mixture and diced tomatoes to the egg mixture. Season with salt and pepper. Stir well.
5. Remove sweet potato crust from the oven. Pour egg mixture over top of the crust. Reduce the temperature of the oven to 375°F (190°C). Place quiche in the oven and bake for 30 to 40 minutes or until the top is golden brown.
6. Remove from oven and cut into slices. Enjoy!

Nutrition (Amount Per Serving) - Calories: 182, Fat: 9g, Saturated: 3g, Carbs: 11g, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 3g, Protein: 13g, Cholesterol: 326mg, Sodium: 181mg, Potassium: 504mg, Iron: 3mg

Stony Brook Medicine Patient Support Groups



All programs are free to stony brook medicine cancer patients but require registration.

Lung Cancer Support Group

Education and support for patients with lung cancer.
Call: (631) 638-0039

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Education and support for patients with prostate cancer.
Call: (631) 444-4343

Leukemia/Lymphoma Support Group

Education and support for patients with blood cancers.
Call: (631) 638-0922

Smoking Cessation

Programs offered through the New York State Smokers Quitline.
Call: (866) 697-8487

**Carol M. Baldwin-Breast Cancer
Education/Support Group**

Get together with other women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer to Learn more about managing this disease and share personal experiences. Education & support for breast cancer patients.

Call: Paulet at (631) 638-7783 or Mary at (631) 444-1354

Gynecologic Oncology Support Group

Support and education for patients with GYN cancer.
Call: (631) 444-3442

For most up-to-date information on the groups' specific meeting dates and times.

**Call HealthConnect at
(631) 444-4000.**

Website: <https://cancer.stonybrookmedicine.edu/patient-support/support-groups>

Creating Art From Trauma

Interested in Sharing Your Art?



We are aware that many of our patients create impactful pieces of art including, but not limited to woodworking, books, paintings, plays, music, poetry, comedy, etc., inspired by your time serving our country on 9/11/2001, and in the recovery efforts thereafter.

We are interested in knowing how you've coped using art throughout the years, and we'd like to feature your creations to assist and inspire other responders.

The art would be shared in our newsletter or waiting room slideshow to display some helpful outlets to the community.

If you are interested in sharing what you've created, contact:
Camile Arnone, Communications Coordinator:
Camile.Arnone@stonybrookmedicine.edu (631)855-1200
(When prompted, say, "Camile")

Going Through a Tough Time?

Help is Available.



Mental Health Resources

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
NYS Crisis Text Line

1- 800-273-8255
Text GOT5 to 741741

National Domestic Violence Hotline
Family Service League-DASH Hotline 24/7

1-800-799-7233
631-952-3333

Alcohol and Substance Use Treatment Resources

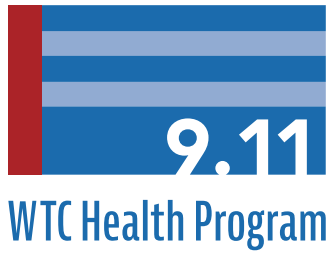
Long Island Council on Alcoholism & Drug Dependence 24/7 Hotline 631-979-1700

Nassau County Alcoholics Anonymous 24/7 Hotline
Suffolk County Alcoholics Anonymous 24/7 Hotline

516-292-3040
631-654-1150

If You Are Having a Crisis, Please Dial 9-8-8.
***988 is the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline Available 24/7**

Visit the WTC Program Website at: www.cdc.gov/wtc/mentalhealth
for additional mental health resources



Stony Brook World Trade Center Health and Wellness Program
500 Commack Road, Suite 160
Commack, NY 11725

Clinics Closed:
September 2 - Labor Day

Locations:

Commack Clinic

500 Commack Road, Suite 160
Commack, NY 11725
(631) 855-1200

Westbury Clinic

1600 Stewart Avenue, Suite 220
Westbury, NY 11590
(631) 855-1200



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