

## **Dragon, Karen E. (CDC/NIOSH/EID)**

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**From:** Brian Cosmello [bcosmello@hotmail.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 19, 2011 2:29 PM  
**To:** NIOSH Docket Office (CDC)  
**Cc:** 911health.now@gmail.com; joe.soldevere@mail.house.gov; Cone, James E. <NY> (CDC health.nyc.gov); dtornberg@logisticshealth.com  
**Subject:** NIOSH Docket - Zadroga Bill Feedback - Please Read

Dear Dr. Howard and all NIOSH Representatives,

My name is Brian Cosmello, I'm 33 years old and I have Leukemia. Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia, to be exact. This form of Leukemia, and for the most part, most Leukemias, are diagnosed in older individuals (over 60 years), but because of my exposure to the 09/11 attacks, I was diagnosed with Leukemia at the age of 31.

I was diagnosed with Chronic Myelogenous Leukemia (CML) in March of 2009. I have lived most of my life in the New York and New Jersey areas, but I currently reside with my wife in Raleigh, NC. I have been receiving ongoing treatment from Duke Medical in Durham, NC since my diagnosis. Needless to say, the shock of being diagnosed and treated for CML for the past two years has been quite a challenging and life changing occurrence, not only for me, but for my whole family.

I know that the current Zadroga Bill does not include cancers, but I honestly do not know why! My wife and I have learned a great deal about this disease, mostly out of necessity and life-altering curiosity. Leukemia is a cancer involving the mutation of the blood and the blood cells produced by bone marrow. Though doctors, oncologists and hematologists are still researching the many causes of this mutation in the blood and bone marrow, the one thing that they are sure of is that for this mutation to occur, the body has to be exposed to some sort of radiation, chemical or some other foreign body. In addition, doctors and researchers have found that once the body has experienced such exposure, there is generally a 7 to 12 year window of time in which signs and symptoms of body failure and/or cancer occur.

When I was officially diagnosed with CML on March 23rd, 2009, a team of doctors at Duke Medical sat down with me and my family to discuss many issues, including the possible cause of this mutation in my body. They asked me what type of work and job function I had been doing for the past 7 to 12 years, and if during that time, I had been exposed to any sort of radiation or foreign substance. I explained to them that I was in college at the University of Pennsylvania until I graduated in the year 2000, and up to that point had never had any such exposure. For the past 10 years, I had worked in Finance and Investments in New York City and Charlotte NC, and again, had really never been exposed to such substances at any time....other than during one period of time. That time, was September 11, 2001.

From September of 2001 until April of 2002, I was working for an Options Trading firm on the American Stock Exchange, while living in Hoboken, New Jersey. The American Stock Exchange (AMEX) is located only a few blocks from the former World Trade Center Towers, and my office was

only 2 blocks from the towers. On the morning of 09/11/01, after the planes crashed into the Twin Towers, I was standing with a colleague of mine right in front of the first tower, watching the fire burning, waiting to see if the stock exchange was going to be opening for the day. As we were standing there, the first tower began to waver at the top, and all of a sudden, in a rush and sounding like an avalanche, the building came crashing down right next to us as we ran away as fast as we could. Within seconds, the huge cloud of smoke, debris, soot, (and whatever else might have been in that cloud) engulfed my body. Luckily, I wasn't hit by any large debris, but my whole body, internally and externally, was covered and inundated with the debris. I was suffocating, puking and coughing up debris for about 15 minutes after the cloud of debris engulfed me. I had trouble breathing, and for about five minutes, it was pitch black. Every inch of my body was covered with soot and debris. Once I got my bearings, I stumbled to a nearby deli, where they were giving out free water and shelter. I was happy to be alive. Having worked in the investment markets, the stock exchanges in New York were closed for the rest of that week, and didn't reopen until the following Monday the 17th. From the 17th of September until our office closed down in April of 2002, I spent every day working on the AMEX, watching the clean-up and smelling the stench in the air. After the firm I was working for, Delta Based Strategies, closed our NYC office in April of 2002, I was sad about the loss of my job, but I was a little relieved that I decided to relocate away from NYC.

The point of my whole story is that within the past 7 to 12 year time frame, the only time I have ever been exposed to possible radiation or foreign chemicals was on the infamous day of 09/11, and the many days following, while the clean-up was going on, and the air constantly reeked of smoke, soot and stench. In talking with my doctors, family members and counselors, they all pretty much agree that given the fact that the ONLY time I have been exposed to any sort of radiation or foreign chemical was during the 09/11 attacks and the days following, that my subsequent diagnosis of Leukemia stemmed from that exposure.

I have Leukemia, and the reason I developed the cancerous mutation in my blood and bone marrow was the exposure of my body to the chemicals and radiation in the air from that infamous disaster. For the two years, I have been receiving chemotherapy on a daily basis, and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. On a daily basis, I experience nausea, diarrhea, cramping, swelling, and overall fatigue. My life will never be the same, nor will my wife's or the rest of my family's.

I hope that you, Dr. Howard, and the rest of the NIOSH Community takes my story to heart, as not only was my 09/11 exposure the cause of my Leukemia diagnosis, but I also know that since many forms of cancer, like Leukemia, can lie dormant for many years after initial exposure, there WILL BE many more cases like mine coming to the forefront. I have spent the past two years keeping in constant contact with the individuals and groups who are strong proponents of 09/11 victims. Individuals and groups such as Joe Soldevere of Congresswoman Maloney's office, the office of Senator Gillibrand, Claire Calladine of 09/11 Health Now, Jim Cone and Jeff Hon of the WTC Health Registry/ Dept. of NYC Health and Mental Hygiene, Dr. Tornberg of Logistics Health Inc., Dr. Hannah Jordan MD, the multiple WTC Centers of Excellence and many others. But until now, with the passing of the Zadroga Bill, there has been no support for 09/11 victims who live outside of the NYC area and/or who were not first responders on 09/11/01. I am lucky in that after two years, my body has responded well to treatment I have received, but my Leukemia will be a life long battle. I worry for myself and my family in being able to cover the long term costs and needs of this disease, and I'm sure many others who are or will be in my shoes will feel the same. My daily chemotherapy

alone (Gleevec), without insurance coverage, is marked up to anywhere between two and four thousand dollars for a 30 day supply. I am extremely worried that I will not have the financial capability to cover such costs without insurance coverage. Ensuring I have the means to treat my Leukemia is of paramount concern to me and my family. I urge you to include cancer, and specifically Leukemia, as a covered condition under the Zadroga Bill.

Regards,  
Brian Cosmello  
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