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TUESDAY, AUGUST 24, 2004

## NYC Hospitals Desperately Underfunded To Fight Terrorism

by Michael in New York on 8/24/2004 10:18:00 PM

It's been three years since NYC suffered its SECOND devastating direct attack by terrorists and still hospitals across the city are **desperately unprepared and underfunded** by the federal government.

"Hospital officials across the city say they still lack much of the important protective clothing, decontamination facilities and essential drug supplies that could be needed to respond to a biological, chemical or nuclear strike. Shortly after the 9/11 attacks, the federal government said it was *essential* that the nation's hospitals improve their ability to handle complex, catastrophic disasters, and it warned the hospitals that they might have to wage that response without outside aid from the government or military for as long as 48 to 72 hours after any terrorist attack. But hospital officials in the city say Washington has failed to provide adequate direction on how to run such extraordinary responses, and have not come anywhere close to providing the kind of money they say they need."

Later, the story adds,

"In New York City, a number of hospitals have spent about \$5 million apiece since 9/11 to install decontamination showers, buy protective equipment and train staff members. For this effort, they have each been reimbursed roughly \$75,000 from Washington, according to Mr. Raske's association. The hospitals, which are facing many other financial pressures, say they would have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars more to make more meaningful progress toward readiness."

This is just one city, albeit one that has proven the most tempting target imaginable for terrorists and one Bush wants to cynically employ as a rallying point for his reelection campaign. If he truly cared about fighting terrorism and truly cared about NYC, where is the money he promised and reneged on? Where is the attention to real problems like helping hospitals in major urban areas get prepared for chemical, biological and nuclear attacks?



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