

Remembering Dr. Stephen Levin, Physician Who Dedicated His Career to Injured Workers

Former Board Medical Director Widely Recognized for Groundbreaking Work

When the Board filled its medical director position after nearly a dozen vacant years in 2009, it hired whom it felt best for the job: an acknowledged expert in the treatment of injured workers and the causes of industrial diseases and accidents, a physician with a national reputation for his work and compassion. Now, the Board mourns his passing.

Dr. Stephen Levin, former Board medical director, expert in occupational medicine and a pioneer in the treatment and diagnosis of World Trade Center workers, died on Feb. 7. He was 70.

A physician with sterling credentials treating injured workers, Dr. Levin's arrival brought immediate credibility to the Board at a time when the agency was moving deeply into medical care. He stressed evidence-based medicine and the importance of restoring people as closely as possible to their normal routines of life, with work just one of those activities. Dr. Levin quickly established relationships with disparate medical and advocacy communities. He founded the present medical director's office, and brought the Medical Treatment Guidelines to fruition.

"He was very skilled, kind, giving and compassionate, just as you'd expect in a great doctor. He accomplished so much as our medical director with his unique gift for bringing people together from often entrenched and conflicting opinions to a common ground," Chair Robert Beloten said.

Dr. Levin practiced more than 30 years at the The Mt. Sinai – Irving J. Selikoff Occupational Health Clinical Center, including 25 years as

its medical co-director. Internationally known for his World Trade Center work, Dr. Levin was the principal investigator of the illnesses and then for the data collection performed by the Mt. Sinai monitoring program. He later became the treatment program's senior occupational medicine physician, as well as its medical co-director.



Stephen M. Levin MD

Dr. Levin was born in Philadelphia in 1941. His father was a union carpenter; his mother, a hospital aide. He published his first of at least 48

academic papers while still a biology undergraduate, and graduated from New York University School of Medicine in 1967. He subsequently did residencies in surgery, psychiatry and occupational/environmental medicine. A private practitioner during the 1970s, he also worked during that period in a pediatric clinic, a family planning setting and a prison. He entered occupational and environmental medicine in 1977, and joined Mt. Sinai Hospital in 1981.

Dr. Levin was what many of us strive to be in occupational medicine: A fierce advocate on behalf of workers and a dedicated, compassionate and gifted physician. Dr. Levin will be remembered for... his advocacy and unrelenting dedication to thousands of WTC responders ... and his ongoing commitment to promoting worker safety and health not only in New York but on the world stage.
The Mt. Sinai Medical Center

At Mt. Sinai, Dr. Levin directed the Asbestos Archives and Research Center and the Occupational Medicine Residency Program. Advocate for Injured Workers Ed Ruff, who held health and safety positions with the AFL-CIO, sat on The Mount Sinai – Irving J. Selikoff Occupational Health Clinical Center's board while Dr. Levin was there.

"Dr. Levin was a true believer in fighting for the working man. When

We were extremely fortunate to have Dr. Levin re-establish and redefine the medical director's office. He brought instant credibility and tremendous knowledge to the Board. His expertise and compassion for workers was a model for the Board and for his colleagues in medicine.

Former Chair Zachary S. Weiss

people were made ill by their jobs, he was one of the first to find the cause and get it corrected, as well as treat the workers," Ed said. "He took occupational medicine very seriously, and he educated the rest of the medical profession on its importance."

He spent two years as the Board's interim medical director, [interim](#) because of his huge commitments and value elsewhere. The workers' compensation community agrees he achieved his goal for the Board: "I have spent my career dedicated to improving the health of ill and injured workers," Dr. Levin said upon his hiring. "I will bring the same focus and dedication to the medical director position at the Board."

Dr. Levin's capacity for meaningful work and devotion to caring for working people was clear throughout his long career. He leaves the legacy of a physician and a humanitarian.

His legacy lives on within those groundbreaking changes to the WC system upon which he directly impacted, and I consider myself fortunate to have worked with an individual of Steve's integrity.

Jeffrey Kahn MD, The Medical Society of the State of New York

To donate to the Dr. Levin Scholarship Fund, make checks payable to the Stephen M. Levin Foundation and send to:

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Dr. Levin was one of our nation's foremost experts in occupational and environmental medicine and in his career cared for thousands of Americans with work-related injuries and illnesses... his life was so well-lived, and [his family may be comforted knowing] thousands of American lives are immeasurably better because of his work.
US Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney, NY