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**SPECIAL MASTER SHEILA L. BIRNBAUM ANNOUNCES OPENING OF
SEPTEMBER 11th VICTIM COMPENSATION FUND**

Fund Will Continue to Open in Phases throughout October

NEW YORK – September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) Special Master Sheila L. Birnbaum today announced that the fund is officially open for claimants. With today’s opening, potential claimants can now register online, receive a checklist of documents and information that they will need to accompany their claim submission, and access newly updated Frequently Asked Questions. Special Master Birnbaum announced that the VCF will begin accepting claims through its website next month and that the fund’s staff will offer a series of seminars on how to submit claims.

“Over the past several months, we have laid the foundation for a claims process that is fair, transparent and easy to navigate for those whose lives have been most affected by September 11th, and today I’m pleased to announce that the fund is open for business,” said Special Master Birnbaum. “In the weeks ahead, seminars and resources will be available to assist claimants and their families with the process. The fund will begin accepting claims next month.

“We wanted to get the fund up quickly, but we wanted to do it right. We have done that, and the fund has been made stronger as a result of the constructive suggestions and insights of the hundreds of first responders, area residents and workers I have spoken with during this process.”

Special Master Birnbaum noted in an email to potential claimants and interested parties that they are not required to submit claims on the first day that claim forms are available, and that pro bono counsel are volunteering to assist claimants. Claimants who currently suffer from a covered condition have until Oct. 3, 2013, to file a claim, and others will have two years from the date on which they know or should have known of the condition for which they seek compensation, until the VCF stops accepting claims in 2016.

Birnbaum was appointed as special master by Attorney General Eric Holder on May 18, 2011, and has spent several months meeting with, and receiving feedback from,

hundreds of New York-area residents, workers and first responders at town hall meetings held in New York and New Jersey.

The James Zadroga 9/11 Health & Compensation Act reactivated the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund that operated from 2001-2004. The act expands the pool of claimants to include first responders and other individuals in the community who experienced latent physical injuries associated with the attacks or with debris removal.

Additional information about the VCF is available at: www.vcf.gov. To learn more about the eligibility criteria, please visit: www.vcf.gov/faq.html#eli1. Individuals who wish to receive future communications regarding the VCF should register at www.claims.vcf.gov/welcome.aspx or call [855-885-1555](tel:855-885-1555).

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