

Moderator: *That answer introduces our next subject, which is the relationship among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors in the response and recovery. Have we taken away long-lasting lessons from this? Are relationships better? Do we work better across sectors than we used to?*

Karen Schimke: Going back just before September 11th, the New York State Legislature had passed what was called a "bare-bones budget" and left with huge rancor. And right after September 11th, the legislature came back and everybody dragged their arms over everybody else's shoulder and said we are going to be friends forever. Well, about two months later that learning was gone. And if you look at this year's legislative session, you would know how far gone that it is.

The more concrete thing I wanted to mention is one of the things that New York State and the city did to respond to the needs of people in New York that needed health care. They created and expedited emergency Medicaid capacity that included an increase in eligibility, so those people could get Medicaid, as well as an expedited application with very good enrollment counselors with terrific translation services and a lot of word-of-mouth and good public relations. In four months 350,000 people were enrolled in Medicaid, many of whom had tried previously, probably were eligible, but had not been able to get in because of the bureaucratic processing. The application went down from something like 13 pages to one. People like me; we had such hopes from the learning from the 9/11 emergency Medicaid. Guess what? Not one single thing has changed in Medicaid enrollment or eligibility. And so, no, I haven't seen the kinds of institutionalized changes either within a single system or across systems that we all thought was going to happen.

Larry Knafo: The Family Assistance Center was a great example of how we had all of these great organizations—the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Safe Horizons, and dozens of groups—dedicated to helping the victims and the families of September 11th. They were all in one location and a family member could come in and make the rounds between all of these organizations. The only problem was that there was no coordination between the organizations. What one organization was doing may have completely contradicted what another one was doing. So we need to get somebody taking a leadership role and getting the human service groups together, the transportation groups, all the different groups to start working together.

Volunteer emergency response—I remember in the first two days after September 11, we had hundreds and hundreds of people showing up at the Javits Center and at Piers 92 and 94 wanting to help. And there was no coordination. It was just masses of people showing up and there was just no way to control that. There was no way to organize them. So we really need to start looking at coordinating in the smaller areas. Otherwise, it is just like herding cats.