American Cancer Society and International Association of Fire Fighters Collaborate To Help Fire Fighters, EMS Personnel with Cancer Detection, Treatment and Prevention

Occupational cancer deaths now leading cause of death for fire fighters and EMS personnel

NEW YORK, Dec. 2, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- The American Cancer Society (ACS) and the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) today launched an historic, long-term collaboration to help fire fighters and emergency medical services (EMS) personnel with detection, treatment and prevention of cancer.

Occupational cancer has surpassed cardiac events to become the leading cause of death for fire fighters and EMS personnel. Numerous studies have shown that cancer rates are significantly higher for fire fighters than the general population and that fire fighters in the United States and Canada are developing job-related cancers at a rate higher than ever.

For fire fighters battling fires, it is becoming more likely that they will also one day fight cancer. The leading cause of cancer among fire fighters is not from the fire itself, but from the toxic chemicals released from a fire. Exposures to these toxins and carcinogens occur at the fire scene and back at the station both from contaminated gear and equipment and from diesel exhaust.

More than 60 cancers have been linked to 9/11 toxins; 200 FDNY members have died due to 9/11-related illnesses, while more than 3,000 have been diagnosed with at least one type of cancer. A 2019 Jalilian et al meta-analysis showed fire fighters have an increased risk of eight cancers and increased mortality risk for two cancers.

"Cancer is now one of the biggest fights we face in the fire service, but we are determined to do all we can to end this deadly scourge," said IAFF General President Edward Kelly. "We are so proud of this new collaboration with the American Cancer Society because we know working together with our combined resources and commitment, we can save more fire fighters' lives."

The alliance between ACS and IAFF will make cancer resources more readily available through occupational cancer prevention and patient support programs and will provide information and resources to help prevent and treat occupational cancer.

"The American Cancer Society is proud to join with the International Association of Fire Fighters to offer fire fighters and their families the critical support and programs they need to cope with cancer and to prevent cancer in the future," said Dr. Karen Knudsen, the American Cancer Society's Chief Executive Officer. "We know from numerous studies that cancer rates run significantly higher for fire fighters than the general population. With this important collaboration, we can help save the lives of fire fighters and EMS workers by making cancer resources more readily available through access to cancer prevention and patient support programs."

The collaboration will allow the IAFF and ACS to address occupational cancer and share research to ensure that the most current information reaches fire fighters and emergency medical personnel. The IAFF and ACS will collaborate on a variety of projects and research that advance the missions of both organizations regarding occupational cancer.

The two organizations have developed a comprehensive online resource, **iaff.org/fightcancer**, that includes the latest support for cancer in the fire service, patient support services, prevention programs and other important information for IAFF members facing a cancer diagnosis. A dedicated phone line has also been established.

More information is available at **iaff.org/fightcancer**.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research to free lodging near treatment, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment and convening powerful activists to create awareness and impact, the Society is attacking cancer from every angle. For more information, visit www.cancer.org.

About the International Association of Fire Fighters

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) is the driving force behind nearly every advance in the fire and emergency services in the 21st century. With headquarters in Washington, DC, and Ottawa, Ontario, the IAFF represents more than 325,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics in more than 3,500 affiliates. IAFF members protect more than 85 percent of the population in communities throughout the United States and Canada. The IAFF is also one of the most active lobbying organizations in Washington, DC. The IAFF Political Action Committee, FIREPAC, is among the top one-half of 1% of all federally registered PACs in the country. Learn more at www.iaff.org.

SOURCE American Cancer Society

For further information: IAFF Contact: Tim Burn (202) 230-7167; tburn@iaff.org; ACS Contacts: Elissa McCrary: 770 315-8261; elissa.mccrary@cancer.org; Desiree Berenguer Carton; 973 703-3241; desiree.carton@cancer.org