

S.73 Firefighter Cancer Working Group

Thursday, August 31, 2023

Virtual meeting started at 2:00 pm

Participants:

- Robert Sponable, Michael Skaza, Brad Reed, Dean Gilmore, Cindy Ell, Chris Dube, Val Bowman

Introduction and Review of Statutory Report Requirements

- On or before January 15, 2024, the Director of the Division of Fire Safety must submit a report to the legislature regarding:
 - The projected cost for the State to fund annual or biennial cancer screenings for all career and volunteer firefighters in Vermont.
 - The projected cost for the State to fund cancer screenings for all enrollees in the VFA Firefighter I certification program prior to commencement of training.
 - Potential opportunities for the State to fund the replacement of PPE for all volunteer and career firefighters on a rolling basis so that all PPE is replaced within 10 years after being acquired.
 - Potential opportunities for the State to reduce the cost to fire departments for the replacement of PPE.
 - The report may include recommendations for legislative action to facilitate:
 - The early identification of cancer in firefighters.
 - The acquisition of PPE by fire departments.
 - The elimination of PFAS and other carcinogens in firefighting equipment.

Develop Strategies to Gather Information for the Report to the Legislature

- Cindy will provide the IAFF recommendations for cancer screenings.
- There will be different screenings based on age demographics. Mike will work with Fire Academy staff to pull together a list sorted by age. Once the initial list is compiled, Mike will reach out to Dean to fill in any information gaps if necessary.
- Brad raised the question of tracking firefighters to the age of 65 or is this just for active firefighters?
- The cost of gear is five thousand per set. Could the State possibly get a contract cheaper that local fire departments could purchase from?

Establish a Timeline for the Drafting of the Report

- Report will have a 1st draft targeted deadline of December 1st and final draft will have a deadline of January 1st. Finalized document will be transmitted to the Director on January 2nd.
- The group will meet every 2 weeks, Thursdays at 2 pm.
- Virtual meetings will be the primary format.

With no further business, board members adjourned at 3:00 PM (approximately)