



Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance Committee Meeting Minutes

Saturday, June 12, 2021 ♦ 1:00pm

Overview

The Fire Service Occupational Cancer Alliance Committee held a meeting on Saturday, June 12, 2021. The meeting was facilitated by the First Responder Center for Excellence. The following summarizes the activities of the meeting.

Alliance Member Attendees

Jefferey Burgess, MD, MS, MPH
Joe Domitrovich, Ph.D.
Cindy Ell
Kenny Fent, Ph.D.
Joseph Finn
Chuck Flynn
Bryan Frieders, MPA
Julius Halas
Michael Hamrock, MD
Sara Jahnke, Ph.D.
Ed Klima
Frank Leeb
Ed Mann
Rich Marinucci
Richard Paris
Kevin Roche
Mario Trevino

University of Arizona
U.S. Forest Service
Firefighter Cancer Foundation
NIOSH
Boston Fire Department (Ret.)
VCOS
FCSN
National Assoc. of State Fire Marshals
First Call Foundation
NDRI, Inc.
First Responder Center for Excellence
FDNY Deputy Chief
Logan Fire Dept./Providence
Fire Department Safety Officers Assoc.
Boston Fire Fighters Local 718
National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
Las Vegas Fire Department (Ret.)



Guest Attendees

*Abdul Alobireed
Shawn Beitel
Casey Grant
John Gulotta
Kepra Jack
Jeff Pauley
Graham Pawlet
Andrew Schwartz
Nathan Trauernicht
Darin Wallentine
Molly West
Keith Tyson*

*University of Pittsburgh
University of Arizona
DSRAE, LLC
Tucson Fire Department
Heart Fit for Duty
IAAI Health & Safety
U.S. Forrest Service
LION
IFE USA/IAFC SHS
Tucson Fire Department
U.S. Forest Service
Firefighter Cancer Support Network*



Welcome and Opening Remarks - Ed Klima

Ed Klima, Managing Director of the [First Responder Center for Excellence](#) welcomed everyone to the meeting. The strategic plan update and the September 2020 steering committee minutes were emailed to everyone prior to the meeting.

Introduction of attendees followed.

Organizational Updates

Chuck Flynn/VCOS - VCOS is in the process of updating the Lavender Ribbon Report. Hoping to release it at FRI in July but if not, it will be released in November at VCOS Symposium in the Sun, in Clearwater, FL.

Bryan Frieders/FCSN – FCSN is transitioning into Canada. Keith Tyson has stepped down as Vice President of Education, Research, Development and Outreach. Bryan recognized Keith for all he's done.

Michael Hamrock/First Call Foundation - 33% of Boston Firefighters skin tests come back with nodules, biopsy, thoracic aorta. Working to get testing with Insurance Companies. Early detection is best.

Frank Leeb/FDNY – Encouraging that the 9/11 cancer data shows the survivability rate increasing, feels it all goes back to what Dr. Hamrock shared about early detection and how important it is.

Ed Klima/FRCE – The FRCE received funding to revise the IAFC's providers guide. This includes (1) updating the testing that is recommended in the guide (2) providing supporting documentation for clinicians based on evaluation feedback from them that they understand the guidance, but they want more supporting documentation.

Discussion: Another problem firefighters have when they take the providers guide to their primary care physician, they get push back on what is covered by insurance. Working with the insurance industry to provide codes could be beneficial.

The FRCE continues to hold Regional Cancer Seminars. In 2019, prior to COVID the seminars were very successful. It was decided not to hold them virtually in 2020 because we felt the real value is in holding them in person. The first training since the pandemic was held in March and the remaining seminars are being scheduled as the funds will run out in 2022. If anyone is interested in holding a seminar, please contact Ed or Lori.

The FRCE Research to Practice Portal was recently updated and has over 1000



resources/articles. We wanted to provide a format that was easily searchable.

Now available on the FRCE website is the Firefighter Physical toolkit. The toolkit is for small combination volunteer departments trying to implement a physical program. It provides sample policies, sample procedures on how to get funding and how to implement a program.

In conjunction with Firehouse Expo in September, the FRCE will be hosting two meetings:

A consensus meeting to work on developing a strategy from an overall health and wellness perspective. Currently we have a strategic plan for cancer and behavioral health, we are looking to develop one for overall health and wellness.

A telemedicine meeting to look at what opportunities there are going forward and what are some of the things we learned last year.

Prior to the pandemic, worked with Larry Petrick to create an updated presumptive legislative guide. The guide is updated through the beginning of 2020 and is available upon request.

Jeff Burgess/University of Arizona – The FFCCS has made a lot of advances in terms of the expansion study. Continuing work on fire investigators & trainers working with NIOSH to look at total exposures and health effects. With NIOSH's help we've expanded the buoy side of the wildland interface and have a lot of work coming back from LA County and Orange County Fire Authority.

With funding received to work with volunteers. Working with Dr. Judith Graber of Rutgers she is helping us and bringing in a substantial number of volunteer firefighters to the study.

Also received funding for a women's firefighter study, it involves not just cancer risks but reproductive outcomes and stress. Working with Sara Jahnke, currently we have over 15/20 fire departments participating.

Continuing to generate from this information about health risks and exposures to firefighters and from other studies IARC has chosen to revisit firefighting and its association with cancer.

Discussion: Feels this issue pertains to cancer as well as a concern about adverse reproductive outcomes to firefighters, including children of firefighters. There are studies out there for increasing cancer in kids of firefighters. There have been conflicting articles on birth defects. Don't know the extent but feels there needs to be a study to look at it. Feels it's important and relates to cancer, many exposures can lead to adverse reproductive risks.



Rich Marinucci/[FDSOA](#) – Taking all this information and trying to interject it into our training. The annual Fire Apparatus & Health and Safety Conference is scheduled for January 12 & 13, 2022 in Scottsdale, AZ. More than usual part of the presentations will be on cancer and cancer prevention. Also, taking a lot of the information and putting it into 2-day ISO & HSO academies.

In the absence of being able to meet in person last year during COVID, we started Wellness Wednesdays. These are 1–2-minute videos that give a quick tip that gets posted on social media.

Sara Jahnke/[NDRI, Inc.](#) – Just finished a study with Oregon State University on dose. Comparison to on duty versus off duty. Higher PAH found in on duty firefighters.

Working with FCSN on a project from their prevention grant, the group 1540 partnered to do some dissemination of training and resources around early detection, being aware of your symptoms and how to talk to your dr. about them. As part of this, we are developing summary documents on each of the major types of cancers firefighters are exposed too. Firefighters can use these documents when they go to talk to their doctor or when they are trying to get coverage.

Working to update the Providers Guide by adding supporting documentation. Some feedback we received from clinicians is why certain testing is recommended so we are adding references and also looking to partner with a primary care organization, where they can go if they want physician information.

Working on the Wildland Firefighter Cancer Training modules, putting together some online training resources around health behaviors and modifiable risk factors.

Jeff Pauley/[IAAI](#) – Looking at starting an Accident/Near Miss Database for Fire Investigators. Survey was completed of our membership; responses will be reviewed and if everyone agrees we will start looking for funding.

Andrew Schwartz/[LION](#) –LION has been focused on the TotalCare Cleaning and Repair Business, trying to find better ways to more effectively remove contaminants from PPE. Don't have results that are market ready yet but working on it and have some potential technologies that could be very effective. This has been the primary focus, how to get the

contaminant out of the gear at a much higher level because the NFPA 1851 washing process is not 100% effective. There's still a lot of variability in the 1851 cleaning process and on what is removed so one of the focuses we have been pushing is trying to get something that doesn't destroy the gear. Hoping to have results by next year.

What can we do in our communications and user guides to be more effective? How do we



communicate user information more effectively? How do we improve it? How can we make it more effective to get the message that we are trying to get to the firefighters? Reach out to Andy with any ideas you may have.

Ed Klima thanked LION for all their support of the FRCE.

Kenny Fent/NIOSH – Wrapping up the PPE Interface study with IFSI / UL. Headed back to IFSI this summer to do human subject testing. The purpose of the study is to determine what happens when you tighten up the interfaces around the neck, wrist and waist for the turn out gear and how does that effect the chemical exposures and heat stress.

Will be publishing a paper soon where we show the gas and vapor breakdown for turn out gear. We saw really high levels of benzene breaking through turn out gear. and then working on a paper right now where we measured PAH metabyllites in urine before and after firefighting hope to have a paper out by the end of the year.

Finished data collection for our wildland firefighter health effects study in partnership with the Forest and Park Service. Unfortunately, we lost a year of data collection because of COVID but we are combing through the data we do have and just recently submitted a methods paper.

We've made a lot of progress from the science side of things on the National FF Registry. We have an approved protocol questionnaire and consent form and working to get the last round of assurances and approvals. However, a hold up is the IT side of things and developing a public facing registration system. There are new data security regulations we have to meet; this has caused quite a delay and some challenges. We need as much support as we can to get this up and running, we need the scientific and fire service stakeholders to reach out to your congress members or the CDC director and share how important this is to get done.



Ed Klima – We will get some talking points from Kenny, that people can use when reaching out to their congress members.

Joe Domitrovich/U.S. Forest Service – Wrapped up our collaboration with NIOSH on the multi-year health effects study. Looked at renal function and pulmonary function. A methods paper is being submitted. Working now to look at some more targeted functional areas.

Also working on a systemic review of carcinogens in the Wildland Fire Environment. This is an anchor point to see what is out there, with this review we will have a better understanding of the carcinogen exposure.

If you're working on development of educational materials for wildland, please reach out to



Molly West or Joe. They can help and make sure the verbiage is correct and help target the wildland fire environment.

Closing

In closing, Ed Klima recapped key takeaways from the meeting:

1. Consolidating data from firefighter physicals to help with making recommendations for more advanced screenings
2. Add research on Reproductive Health in firefighters
3. Start a task group to develop marketing strategies & look at funding to implement
 - how to keep information relevant and in the forefront,
 - how to make messaging personal and powerful
 - using different social media platforms
4. Future Symposiums
 - every other year?
 - in conjunction with University of Miami?
 - rotate locations?
 - overall Health & Wellness to include behavioral health, cancer and health & wellness topics?
5. Response to IARC research in June 2022

The meeting concluded at 3:00 p.m. (EST)