



National Firefighter [Cancer] Registry Appropriations

Request: Provide \$7.5 million in FY 2027 funding to the National Firefighter Registry

What does the National Firefighter Registry do?

In 2018, a law was enacted directing the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop and maintain a National Firefighter Registry for the purpose of collecting relevant history and occupational information that can be linked to available cancer registry data in existing State cancer registries. The purpose of the Registry is to improve our knowledge of how and why firefighters contract cancer.

Why is monitoring firefighter cancer important?

For decades studies have indicated a strong link between firefighting and increased risk for several major cancers. The heightened incidence of cancer among firefighters has been attributed to their frequent exposure to a range of harmful substances. An extensive study published by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in 2014 found that firefighters were at an increased risk of being diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma and found potential links between exposure to fire incidents and heightened risks for lung cancer and leukemia, among several others.

Why do we need a National Firefighter Registry?

Past studies examining cancer incidence among firefighters have been limited by the availability and standardization of important epidemiological data, relatively small sample sizes, inconsistencies in the operationalization of key terms and metrics, incomplete employment histories and an underrepresentation of minority, female and volunteer firefighters. The National Firefighter Registry gives researchers and public health agencies more direct and comprehensive access to the specific set of information they need to conduct more robust, focused and epidemiologically rigorous research on cancer incidence among firefighters. It also provides better information to firefighters on how to take precautions to reduce cancer risks in the future, as well as enable researchers to develop more sophisticated safety equipment and protocols to lower cancer risks.