

CANCER RESOURCES AND SUPPORT NETWORKS FOR FIRE FIGHTERS AND CAREGIVERS



This factsheet was developed by the International Association of Fire Fighters and the Firefighter Cancer Support Network.

Facing a cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, but you are not alone. A variety of resources are available to help you navigate this journey with tools, support networks, and guidance specific to the fire service. These programs are designed to provide you with the information, emotional support, and practical assistance you need to manage your diagnosis, treatment, and recovery.

FIRE FIGHTER CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK (FCSN)

- **Cancer Support Toolbox:** Delivered within days of notifying them of a cancer diagnosis, this toolbox includes tested resources to help manage every stage of your cancer journey.
- **Badge-to-Badge Support:** Connect with peer mentors — fire fighters who are cancer survivors — who provide 1-on-1 mentorship and emotional support.
- **Awareness Month:** Participate in January's Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month for prevention tools and support.
- **Website:** firefightercancersupport.org
- **Contact:** 866-994-FCSN (US) | 438-600-FCSN (Canada)



NATIONAL FIREFIGHTER REGISTRY (NFR)

- By joining the NFR, you contribute to vital research on how workplace exposures affect cancer risk in the fire service. Enrollment takes 5 minutes, the remainder of the enrollment questionnaire can take an additional 20-30 minutes. However, it's possible to log off at any time and resume where you left off.
- **Website:** cdc.gov/niosh/firefighters/registry.html
- **Mythbusting the National Firefighter Registry for Cancer:** <https://www.iaff.org/news/mythbusting-the-national-firefighter-registry-for-cancer-5-facts-you-should-know/>

IAFF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM

- Supports your mental health with resources like counseling, stress management tools, and peer support programs.
- **Website:** iaff.org/behavioral-health

IAFF WELLNESS AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS

- **Wellness Fitness Initiative (WFI):** Tailored programs to support your physical recovery and overall health.
 - **Website:** iaff.org/wellness-fitness
- **IAFF Nutrition Program:** Guidance on maintaining strength and health through nutrition.
 - **Website:** iaff.org/nutrition

TAKE ACTION

- Use FCSN's free toolkits and peer support services to develop a personalized plan for treatment and recovery.
- Talk openly with your support network — friends, family, and peers — about your needs.
- Prioritize your behavioral health by utilizing IAFF counseling or EAP services.

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FOR FAMILIES SUPPORTING A FIRE FIGHTER FACING CANCER

As a family member supporting a fire fighter through a cancer diagnosis, you are an essential part of their care team. While your role may involve providing emotional support and practical help, it's important to also care for your own well-being. Resources are available to help you manage the challenges of caregiving while remaining a strong source of support.

FIRE FIGHTER CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK (FCSN)

- Peer Mentorship for Families:** Connect with families who have supported loved ones through cancer for advice and encouragement.
- Cancer Support Toolbox:** Access guides tailored to the needs of families, including advice on caregiving and practical tools for navigating treatment.
- Website:** firefightercancersupport.org

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Offers a 24/7 helpline and tailored guides for caregivers managing emotional and practical responsibilities.
- Contact:** 1-800-227-2345
- Website:** cancer.org

COUNSELING AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

- IAFF Behavioral Health Division:** Can offer recommendations, including the Center of Excellence, our IAFF-member treatment center, whose staff maintains a database of therapists nationwide that are culturally competent with fire fighters. If a member needs to find a therapist, they can reach out to behavioralhealth@iaff.org for assistance.
- Website:** iaff.org/behavioral-health

PRACTICAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

- Meal Trains and Errand Coordination.** Use platforms like Meal Train to organize help from friends and colleagues.
- Shared Scheduling Tools.** Apps like Google Calendar can help coordinate caregiving duties and treatment schedules among family members.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING YOUR LOVED ONE:

- Communicate Openly.** Talk about their needs and preferences but also share your own boundaries and limits to prevent burnout.
- Practice Self-Care.** Take breaks to rest, exercise, or engage in activities you enjoy to maintain your own health and energy.
- Seek Support.** Join caregiver support groups or counseling programs to connect with others who understand what you're experiencing.



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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO CONSIDER

- Presumptive Health Initiatives: Advocates for recognizing occupational cancer risks.
 - **Website:** iaff.org/presumptive-health
- Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness Month: Learn about prevention and early detection strategies.
 - **Website:** iaff.org/cancer-awareness-month
- American Cancer Society Reach to Recovery Program: Connects caregivers with volunteers for support and practical advice.
 - **Website:** reach.cancer.org
- Patient Resource: Website that provides cancer guides, financial resources, clinical trial information, and more.
 - **Website:** <https://patientresource.com>

TAKEAWAY MESSAGE

FOR OUR FIRE FIGHTERS: You are not alone in your journey. Leverage resources like FCSN, IAFF behavioral health programs, and peer mentorship to support your recovery and well-being.

FOR THE FAMILIES: Your role as a caregiver is vital, but caring for yourself is just as important. Access support networks, practical tools, and counseling to maintain your strength and resilience while supporting your loved one.