

Fort Worth Fire Department & Human Resources Cancer Reduction Efforts

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Cancer in the Fire Service

Fire Call Background



- Structural fires are about 2-3 a day.
- Haz-Mat, chemical spills, and fuel leaks/spills are 2-3 a day.
- Motor Vehicle Accidents (MVAs) are 19-20 a day.
- Several other fires a day from cars, dumpsters, etc.
- Type of facility also impacts the issue – 2005 Valley Solvent Fire

Cancer in the Fire Service

Chemicals that contribute to cancer

- Aldehyde
 - Benzene
 - Hydrogen Chloride
 - Hydrogen Cyanide
 - Nitrogen Dioxide
 - Sulfur Dioxide
 - Polycyclic Aromatics
 - Hydrocarbons
- **THESE CHEMICALS HAVE BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH CANCER AND FOUND IN TESTS COMPLETED ON THE SMOKE ASSOCIATED WITH ALL FIRES INCLUDING STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL FIRES**
 - Source – National Fire Protection Administration (2018)

Texas Legislative Changes 86th Legislative Session

S.B. 2551 (Sen. Hinojosa/Rep. Burrows)

Firefighter and EMT Disease Presumption

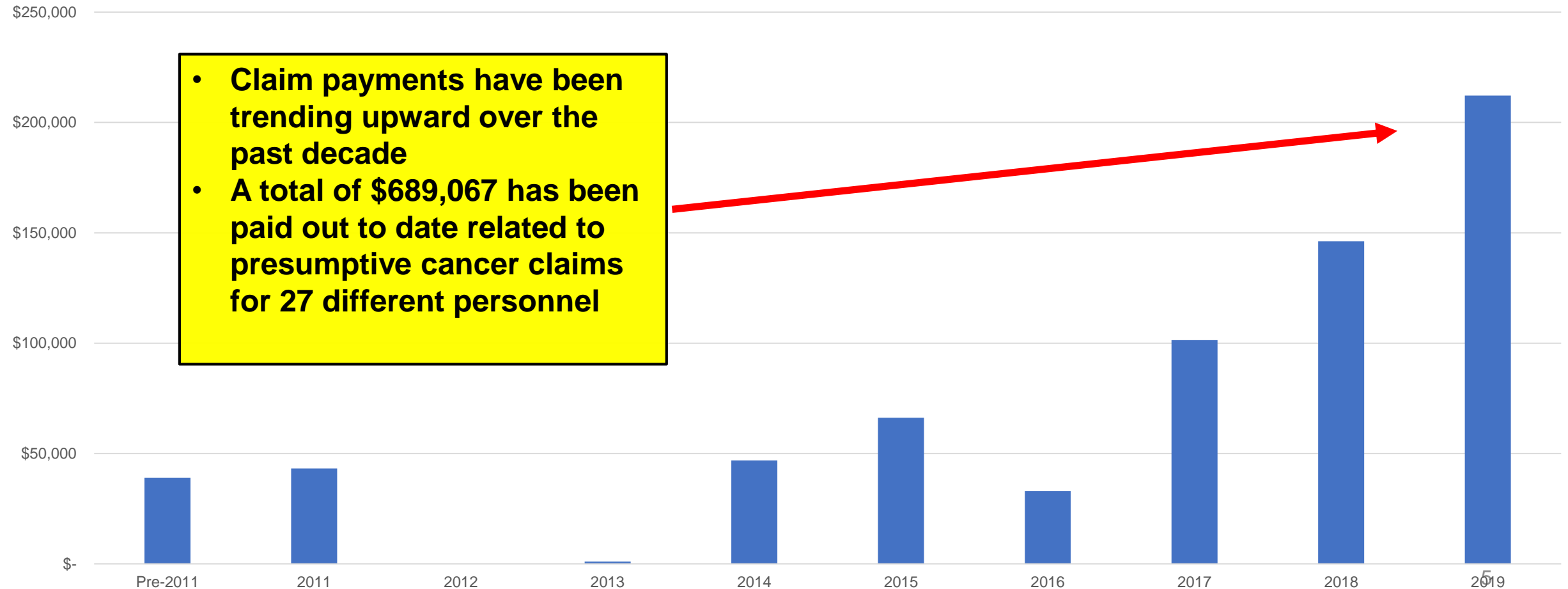
Modifies Current Law to Add New Cancers:

Cancer that originates at the (a) Stomach, colon, rectum, skin, prostate, testis or brain, (b) non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; (c) multiple myeloma; (d) malignant melanoma; and (e) renal cell carcinoma.

Research is critical to determine if additional cancers can be attributed to fire fighting activities so that they can be added to the above list.

Fort Worth Fire Department – Workman’s Compensation History

Fire Presumption Cancer Claims Paid by Year



- **Claim payments have been trending upward over the past decade**
- **A total of \$689,067 has been paid out to date related to presumptive cancer claims for 27 different personnel**

Cancer in the Fire Service

Fort Worth Fire Departmental Cancer Statistics

- 2019 YTD - \$700,000.00 claims for the Fire Department associated with the diagnosis of cancer.
- **32** firefighters in either treatment or remission currently at this time.
- Unknown number of retirees – need time to gather & validate retiree data points
- Fear is an issue as FF's see peers deal with the anxiety of potentially receiving a cancer diagnosis
- **Reinforces the need to provide training, offer forums for conversations on the topic, and encourage more research on cancers that specifically impact firefighters so proactive measures can be developed**

Fort Worth Fire Department Cancer Reduction Program - Goals

- **GOAL** - Partner with community leaders and use scientifically proven methods for education, prevention, detection, pathway to care, and a survivorship program.
- **GOAL** - Build a comprehensive health and wellness program that involves full spectrum approach to behavioral, cardiac, and cancer care.
 - Complete a review of current agreements to determine change opportunities
- **GOAL** - Leave the fire at the fire and not take it back to the firehouse or into other peoples homes and businesses
- **GOAL** – Proactively train firefighters on the risk of cancer, and build a culture of health and wellness within the fire service

Fort Worth Fire Department Cancer Reduction Community Resource Partners

- University of Texas Southwestern (UTSW) – Dr. Argenbright
- Risk Management – Mark Barta
- University of Miami Comprehensive Cancer Center
- IAFF Local 440
- Huguley – Texas Health Resources – Annual Physical Exam

Fort Worth Fire Department

Actions taken to raise awareness and reduce cancer risk

- Supported research grant with UTSW Moncrief Cancer Center
 - Still waiting on response from the review board
- Worked with Texas Health Resources (THR) on changes to the physical screening tool.
- Provided education to recruits and firefighters
- Re-focused the existing cancer committee to peer-support and engagement

Fort Worth Fire Department

Actions taken to raise awareness and reduce cancer risk

- Established a Fire Chief Labor Management Committee to address policy changes, including:
 - Fire gear in stations
 - Required physicals
 - Fire gear cleaning protocols
- Instituted a gear cleaning program
- Started to provide sunscreen and hats
- Supplied wipes to firefighters to clean off after fire exposures

Fort Worth Fire Department

Challenges presented by fire gear and exposure points

Structural Firefighting Gear

- Goal is to get them out of this gear except for structure fires
 - History of wearing it for all types of emergencies and into peoples homes
 - FWFD is required to clean gear after every fire and minimum annual inspection and cleaning
- In 2020 that increase to twice annually creating logistical issues
- Exposure to Diesel and UV rays damages gear
- Costs associated with second set of gear – \$3,500.00 a set
 - 87% are within 4-5 sizes
- Exposure to neck and groin areas even with fire gear properly being worn

Fort Worth Fire Department Proposed Cancer Reduction Budget - \$1,275,000

Equipment	Approximate cost/unit	Total	Justification
Extractor cleaners	30,000	180,000	Cleaning system set up in each district of city
SCBA harness washing system	25,000	25,000	Reduce risk of cross contamination and cleaning
Additional Structural Fire Gear	3,500	300,000	Additional gear to change out when contaminated
Non structural firefighting gear	500	460,000	Protective gear that has not been exposed to fire
Particulate hoods	100	100,000	Reduce contaminate exposure to neck, etc.
Fire gear locker covers	100	90,000	Fire gear cover to reduce risk of deisel exposure
Weatherproof coats	100	90,000	Reduce use of fire gear in inclement weather
Extrication gloves	30	30,000	Reduce use of fire gloves in non-fire related runs
Projected total		1,275,000	

Fire's cancer reduction budget request focuses on protecting fire fighters from exposure to potential cancer-causing elements by purchasing fire gear and gear cleaning equipment

Fort Worth Fire Department Cancer Reduction Proposed Next Steps

- Work with Budget and Risk Management to institute a spending plan for the FY20 budget to purchase fire gear and fire gear cleaning systems
- Put policies and procedures in place to reduce risk with the assistance of the new equipment
- Collaborate with Risk Management to measure the outcome data to determine the impact that these strategies have on diagnosis and the costs associated with the treatment
 - Note: There is a chance that the number of firefighters diagnosed will go up as we become increasingly aggressive with screening and education efforts
- Continue to actively build and develop relationships that will enhance further research on cancer in the fire service, and proactively seek funding opportunities to assist with this initiative.

Questions?

