

NIPSTA

Northeastern Illinois Public Safety Training Academy

NIPSTA 2019 Firefighter Cancer Symposium Flyer

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

In 2010, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health ("NIOSH") began a multi-year study of nearly 30,000 firefighters from the Chicago, Philadelphia and San Francisco Fire Departments to better understand the potential link between firefighting and cancer. In late 2015, the study revealed that firefighters showed higher rates of certain types of cancer than the general U.S. population. Based on U.S. cancer rates, firefighters had a greater number of cancer diagnoses and cancer-related deaths; most were digestive, oral, respiratory and urinary cancers. Twice as many firefighters were diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma, a rare type of cancer caused by exposure to asbestos, and more cases of certain cancers were evident in younger firefighters. When compared to each other, the chance of lung cancer diagnosis or death increased with the amount of time spent at fires, and the chance of death from leukemia increased with the number of fire runs.

NIPSTA is proud to partner with AirOne Equipment, Inc. and other local vendors to sponsor the organization's inaugural **Firefighter Cancer Symposium on Monday, November 25, 2019**. Events will feature lectures and discussions regarding the risks associated with firefighting and cancer, including Peer-to-Peer training by the Firefighter Cancer Support Network. A vendor product showcase will remain in place throughout the day and lunch will be provided courtesy of AirOne Equipment, Inc. *This event is free and all are welcome.*

In this edition of our newsletter, we focus on public safety wellness and feature an interview with David Haley, NIPSTA Fire Academy's Chaplain. We'll hear personal stories from NIPSTA leaders who have been personally affected by career-related cancer. Finally, we'll provide you with an overview of NIPSTA's newest measures to promote wellness within our organization.

On behalf of the NIPSTA staff and our cadre of dedicated instructors, thank you for your continued support of NIPSTA.

Jill Ramaker, Executive Director

DATES

- November 4-6: ICS 300
- November 12-13: ICS 400
- November 16: EMS/SWAT Medical Symposium (*Free to NIPSTA Members*)
- November 18-22: Instructor II
- November 25: FF Cancer Symposium (*Free to NIPSTA Members*)
- December 10: Law Enforcement: Legally Justified, but was it Avoidable? (*LE Members – call for free enrollment options*)
- January 6 - Feb 28: Company Fire Officer
- January 9-10: Active Shooter for Schools, Businesses, and Public Places
- January 14-15: Hazardous Materials Incident Command
- February 3-7: Instructor I

For more dates and to register,
visit nipsta.org



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NIPSTA Fire Academy's Chaplain Focuses on Firefighter Wellness



David Haley is the Chaplain for the NIPSTA Fire Academy along with the Des Plaines Fire Department. In addition to serving as a United Methodist Pastor for 44 years, he has been a fire/police chaplain for 30 years along with serving 17 years as a Firefighter Paramedic. Chaplain Haley presents a lecture called "Stress and Support in the Fire Service: How to Save Your Own Life" to each Fire Academy class at NIPSTA.

Q: What mental health challenges are currently being faced in the Public Safety Industry?

Firefighters are called upon to deal with the absolute worst that can happen to people, often involving death and mutilation, two of our worst primal fears. This can leave long-lasting mental and emotional scars. It is shocking to know that every year, more active and retired firefighters die of suicide than they do of line-of-duty deaths.

Q: How has the concept of wellness changed for public safety in the past few years?

In the last few decades, and especially since 9/11, we've begun to acknowledge that nobody gets out of this job unchanged and that there are times when we must get help to deal with all that is before us. It remains as difficult as ever to ask for help, even as help for fire and police mental health issues has become more beneficial and more widely available.

Q: What advice on wellness would you give to someone who is just beginning their public safety career?

I urge every new class of firefighters to not underestimate the stress of the job and the effect it will have on their personal and professional lives. My advice is to start building healthy habits early on with these four steps:

1. Take care of yourself mentally, physically, and emotionally.
2. Don't neglect, but instead nurture supportive relationships with family and friends.
3. Utilize peer support from your co-workers and your superiors.
4. There is always time to seek help. Do not hesitate to reach out to mental health professionals.

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Staff Stories

Patrick Jesse

Patrick Jesse serves as NIPSTA's Hazardous Materials Program Manager. He has been instrumental in leading the organization's commitment to firefighter wellness and is providing primary oversight of the upcoming Firefighter Cancer Symposium.



Q: How have you been personally affected by Cancer?

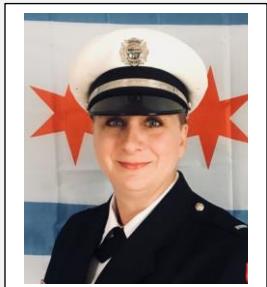
In 2011, I was diagnosed with a rare and aggressive form of non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. Despite feeling fine and not having any evidence in my bloodwork, it was found that I had approximately 30 cancerous lymph nodes throughout my abdomen. I endured 6 months of chemotherapy and was declared in remission in January of 2012.

Q: How has your experience changed the way that you approach wellness education for public safety professionals?

Since that time, I have felt it is important to share my experience with others in the hopes of increasing awareness about the hazards of the job. If I don't share it, I feel that my own experience would be a wasted opportunity to keep others safe.

Q: What advice would you give to someone just entering the profession?

For someone who is just entering into the fire service or public safety arena, I recommend that they remain physically active, pay attention to their nutrition, and pay attention to what hurts or is acting differently in your body. It may be the first sign of something bigger and the sooner you address it, the better your outcome may be.



Elizabeth Ciolino

In March 2017, Beth Ciolino assumed responsibilities as the Program Director for the NIPSTA Center for Disaster and Emergency Medicine (CDEM). Beth has been actively involved in the fire service as both a firefighter and paramedic since 1995. She was a 15-year member of the Chicago Fire Department where she held the rank of Ambulance Commander before retiring due to a medical disability related to cancer influenced by her career in the fire service.

Q: How have you been personally affected by cancer?

In January 2016 I was diagnosed with both breast cancer and cervical cancer, both found during routine examinations. While they were not related to each other, both were able to be traced back to my time working as a firefighter and paramedic. As a result, I spent a year away from my position as an EMS Commander with the Chicago Fire Department while undergoing several surgeries. Just this past spring I was diagnosed with an early stage of yet another type of cancer which also required medical intervention. In combination, these illnesses have had a dramatic impact on both my career and my family and has, unfortunately, resulted in early retirement from a job that I really loved.

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Q: How has your experience opened your eyes to the risk of cancer for women in the fire service?

There are a small but growing number of studies with women firefighters and the specific risks they face. Statistically speaking, the most prominent cancer for women firefighters in a recent study were breast, skin, thyroid and lung. Women firefighters who have been affected by cancer are leading the charge to demand more research: the more data we gather, the more information we can spread to assist with protecting women who follow in our footsteps.

Q: What advice would you give to someone just entering the profession?

I have learned that each public safety professional should learn to be their own and best wellness advocate. Firefighters and paramedics should get into the habit of documenting any exposures, particularly those that seem to be extreme. For those that may become ill, I wholeheartedly recommend that they remain actively involved in public safety. My position here as the Director of the NIPSTA Center for Disaster and Emergency Medicine has been a great next step in continuing my passion for EMS. Finally, I will never forget the kindness shown to me by my colleagues in the fire service, particularly those that I had directly worked with for many years. Their support was invaluable to my recovery.

NIPSTA's Commitment to Wellness in Public Safety

NIPSTA is committed to *leading the charge* in promoting wellness for public safety professionals representing all disciplines, as demonstrated by the following:

- Fire Academy Candidates and Instructors are required to wash their firefighting gear on a regular basis.
 - NIPSTA maintains a specialized gear washing system to ensure proper cleaning.
- Firefighting turnout gear is no longer permitted in the Education Center classrooms or hallways.
- Fire Academy Candidates receive lectures and specialized training in mental health and wellness, including education from nutritionists who specialized in healthy eating habits for public safety professionals.
- The NIPSTA Fire Academy is committed to the goal of educating, preparing and building a team of Candidates with an understanding of and appreciation for the physical demands required of the modern firefighter. The overall objectives of the *NIPSTA Fire Academy Physical Fitness Program* are as follows:
 - To continually assess each Candidate's physical conditioning status to ensure that the participant is capable of functioning at a basic level of fitness throughout the program.
 - To introduce Candidates to the physical demands and kinetic requirements of the role of a firefighter; to prepare Candidates for future/anticipated physical demands; and to promote the longstanding career benefits of firefighter wellness.
 - To promote the team building skills and personal discipline required for optimal, collaborative and safe operations on the fire ground.



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FIREFIGHTER CANCER SYMPOSIUM

NIPSTA, WITH THE SUPPORT OF AIR ONE EQUIPMENT, IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THE FIRST FIREFIGHTER CANCER SYMPOSIUM AND PRODUCT SHOWCASE.

**MONDAY
NOV. 25th
0800-1600hrs
FREE ADMISSION**

NIPSTA
2300 Patriot Blvd. **NIPSTA**
Glenview, IL 60026

Lunch provided by Air One Equipment to all attendees.



**AIR ONE
EQUIPMENT**

THIS EVENT WILL FEATURE LECTURES AND DISCUSSION REGARDING THE RISK OF CANCER ASSOCIATED WITH FIREFIGHTING. A PRODUCT SHOWCASE WILL ALSO FEATURE EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE PARTICIPATING VENDORS.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADDITIONAL VENDORS WILL BE ADDED IN THE FUTURE.

**ADVANCED REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED FOR THIS FREE EVENT.
FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REGISTER:**

NIPSTA.ORG

