

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Mandating Access to Periodic Cancer Screenings for Firefighters

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TRENTON – Governor Murphy today signed legislation that mandates access to periodic cancer screening examinations for firefighters who are not enrolled in the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP), but who are eligible for enrollment in the SHBP by public employment.

Current law entitles a paid, full-time firefighter enrolled in the SHBP or a firefighter employed by a public employer that does not participate in the SHBP, to a cancer screening examination every three years.

This bill ([S2890 \(https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S3000/2890_11.PDF\)](https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2024/S3000/2890_11.PDF)) now extends this benefit to firefighters who waive their employer-sponsored health care but are still eligible for coverage under the SHBP through their employment with a public employer. The State will now reimburse up to \$1,250 per three-year period for each firefighter's examination, regardless of their participation in their employer's health care plan.

"Thousands of firefighters across the state put their lives on the line for their communities," **said Governor Murphy**. "We must do what we can to provide these incredible men and women with the health care they deserve. Preventive cancer screenings will not only save lives and reduce unnecessary suffering, but also ensure our public servants remain healthy."

"This law will help ensure our firefighters, who are regularly exposed to carcinogens through their line of work, will always have access to periodic cancer screenings," **said Senator Greenstein**. "Previous law left a portion of our firefighters out of this guaranteed coverage, unnecessarily leaving them at higher risk. With this reform, they will be better protected and more incentivized to obtain preventative care, which will save lives."

"Early detection can make a real difference in the outcome of a cancer diagnosis," **said Senator Joe Cryan**. "These cancer screenings can save lives, prevent needless suffering, and avoid costly treatment. The firefighters who serve our communities and protect our residents have more than earned the right for this care. This law will provide more incentive and support to have this preventive care done."

"Firefighters can be exposed to hazardous toxins, leading to a higher risk of cancer," **said Assemblyman Sterley Stanley**. "Cancer screening leads to early detection and early diagnosis, both of which give cancer patients the best possible chance for a successful outcome. I am thrilled to see this bill become law, because I know the profound impact it will have in the lives of so many first responders."

"Professional firefighters put themselves, their safety, and their health on the line each day, not hesitating to take heroic risks to save someone they likely don't even know," **said Assemblywoman Verlina Reynolds-Jackson**. "Now, thanks to the law being signed today, many more of these brave individuals can gain access to lifesaving cancer screening exams."

"Firefighters across the state work to keep each of us safe in our communities, risking their lives on a routine basis," **said Assemblywoman Shanique Speight**. "We need to do what we can to protect them. By reimbursing local employers to pay for firefighters' for free cancer screening exams, we are making sure their health and safety is a priority."

"The signing of A3939/S2890 by Gov. Phil Murphy is the culmination of our comprehensive cancer screening program for active career firefighters. This legislation eliminates the financial burden on our municipalities and fire districts to pay for the screenings and having to wait for reimbursement from Treasury. This ensures our members will have access to the critical testing needed because of occupational hazards. Firefighters throughout our nation are being diagnosed with cancer every day. In New Jersey, Firefighter Glen Seiboldt, a 10 year veteran of the Edison Fire Department was diagnosed with Stage 2 non-Hodgkin lymphoma. He received early treatment and is currently in remission. While Glen's cancer was found to be more advanced this screening program has already identified pre-cancer and Stage 1 conditions in multiple firefighters in our state who have been treated and are returning to work with minimal sick leave," **said Matthew Caliente, President of the Professional Firefighters of New Jersey**. "The work done by Assemblyman Sterley Stanley and Senator Linda Greenstein as well as the overwhelming bipartisan support in both houses of our legislature has not gone unnoticed by our membership. Our legislators' support of public safety and recognition of the growing dangers of 'forever chemicals' such as PFAS in firefighting foam and protective garments, or the toxic gas emissions from lithium ion battery fires that are being studied as a link to cancer demonstrates their commitment to ensuring early detection, early treatment, and better outcomes for our firefighters, like Glen, so we can continue to protect our citizens and communities. Thank you to Gov. Murphy for recognizing the importance of our work and signing this legislation into law and to the State Treasury for their cooperation and expertise to make the reimbursement program work."

"Today, let us remember NJ FMBA Legislative Chairman Bobby Allen. Bobby recently succumbed to a valiant fight against cancer. The NJ FMBA has been advocating for cancer screening, presumptive legislation, and cancer registry for years. Had this legislation been around years ago, Bobby may still be with us. Thank you, Governor Murphy and our Legislators who have taken a decades-long fight and brought it to reality. Cancer is the number one killer of Firefighters and this legislation will undoubtedly save lives." **said Eddie Donnelly, President of the New Jersey Firefighters Mutual Benevolent Association**.

"This bill signing is another step forward for Firefighters to receive early detection screenings for a variety of types of cancer. The sooner cancers are detected will mean easier and shorter treatment which in most cases will lead to the Firefighter becoming cancer-free," **said Robert Ordway, President of the New Jersey State Firemen's Association**.

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Office of Governor PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000