

TEXAS FIREFIGHTER CANCER STUDY RESEARCH UPDATE

October 2025



PROJECT IMPORTANCE

The Texas State Legislature has awarded an initiative to advance cancer research aimed at reducing firefighter-related cancers. Firefighters face exposure to hazardous contaminants and carcinogens during firefighter activities, but the long-term health effects are not well understood. This study aims to improve early detection and prevention strategies to protect the health of firefighters.

KEY OUTCOMES

- Identification of high-risk exposures and cancer types among firefighters.
- Evidence-based recommendations for cancer prevention and screening.
- Development of firefighter-specific health monitoring protocols.
- Strengthened collaboration between public health, fire services, and policymakers.

NEWS

STUDY LAUNCH EVENT SEPTEMBER 24, 2025



UTHealth Houston School of Public Health hosted a kickoff event on September 24 at the TMC3 Collaborative Building to launch a \$5 million, multi-year initiative aimed at reducing cancer risks and environmental health impacts for firefighters. The Texas Firefighter Cancer Study (TFCS), led by Dr. Jooyeon Hwang, builds on nearly a decade of research. It will track real-time and integrated exposure to carcinogens from fire smoke exposure, identify early cancer biomarkers, and support annual screenings. The initiative is supported by participating municipal fire departments across Texas, the Texas State Association of Fire Fighters, Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association, and state and local

government officials. Speakers at the event included:

- **Dr. Eric Boerwinkle** - Dean, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health
- **Lacey Hull** - Texas State Representative
- **Chief Thomas Muñoz** - Houston Fire Dept.
- **Patrick M. "Marty" Lancton** - Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association L-341
- **John Riddle** - President, Texas State Association of Fire Fighters
- **Dr. Danny Whu** - Chief Medical Officer, International Association of Fire Fighters
- **Firefighter Jesse Perez** - Brownsville Fire Dept.
- **Captain Homer Salinas** - Mission Fire Dept.

They emphasized the importance of protecting firefighter health through science, policy, and collaboration. Hull shared, "Our firefighters deserve answers and prevention, and we are excited to see the launch of this research study. I was glad to work with my colleagues in the Legislature to appropriate funding for this. As we focus on making Texas healthy again, it is important to prioritize the public servants who place their lives on the line for our safety." This study is backed by a legislative appropriations rider and supported by a team of researchers from UTHealth Houston and affiliated centers.

NEXT STEPS

- Receive final Institutional Review Board approval to begin research activities.
- Initiate recruitment efforts at fire departments across the state and among retired firefighters.

WAYS TO ENGAGE



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 go.uth.edu/TexasFirefighterCancerStudy