

# OFCA Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee

## 2016 Annual Meeting Report

The Safety, Health, and Wellness Committee is the newest committee supporting the mission of Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association. The Board of Trustees authorized the Committee at its October 2015 Board Meeting. The Committee meets quarterly at the OFCA Office with conference calls monthly when not meeting in Columbus.

Accomplishments to date:

- Established Officers:
  - Chair: A/C Rupp
  - Vice-Chair: A/C Anderson
  - Recorder: Capt. Hanifen
  
- Established a committee Charter
  
- The following sub-committees & leaders:
  - Occupational Health & Fitness: Goheen
  - Cancer: Wescott
  - Medical Research: Rupp
  - Behavioral Health: Anderson
  - PPE: Bernzweig
  - Administration/Policy: Rupp
  
- Accomplishments by Group:
  - **Occupational Health & Fitness**
    - The committee met three times via phone conference. Out of those meetings, we developed three goals for our section to begin work on.
      - Those goals are:
        - Develop best practices to meet NFPA and OAC requirements related to health and wellness. To develop an educational program to target legislators and chief officers regarding the benefits and cost savings to having such programs.
        - Develop best practices based on scientific research and create documents usable by fire officers to develop their policy and procedures that predicate this research.
        - Research funding avenues to assist departments with cost of implementing these programs, working with non-profit, government grants, or private industry.
      - Currently studying the white paper released from the 2014 Safety & Health Investment Projects Grant (SHIP), which established many best

practices guidelines. Will begin research on possible funding streams to assist department with implementation of those practices.

○ **Cancer**

- Cancer in the fire service continues to be the leading cause of death for firefighters. In Ohio, attempts to curbe the impact it has on our personnel are taking a multi-point campaign.
- Awareness and prevention are the hallmark to stopping this disease's grown affects and this is being done in several ways.
- Currently, the FCSN's awareness and prevention program (or similar version) is being used in recruit training at nearly all metropolitan fire departments.
- The Ohio Fire Academy continues to have cancer awareness as a piece of their direct delivery and in-house programs; further bridging the gap for awareness.
- We still await the highly anticipated *FCSN Best Practices and Procedures* white paper set for delivery in the coming months. However, a similar version out of the state of Washington is available and being pushed out as requested in Ohio.
- Lastly, the presumptive law for cancer and firefighters (SB27) was passed by the Senate insurance sub-committee and passed in the Senate. It is now held up during summer recess in the House, with anticipation for a hearing this fall.

○ **Medical Research**

- The Medical Research Group is intended to monitor current research projects.
- Projects that identify the increasing medical risks and hazards to the profession with a particular interest in cancer and cardiovascular issues.
- The intent is to ensure that the latest information is made available to Ohio's fire service and aid in its delivery.
- Two projects of particular interest are:
  - Cardiovascular & Chemical Exposure Risks in Modern Firefighting be conducting by IFSI Research; UL FSRI; NIOSH;
  - UIC and the NIOSH-ERC Grant #T42/OH008432-10 to the University of Cincinnati (UC). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the microflora of the mouth (called 'oral microbiome') from firefighters. To study whether the oral microflora is altered because of exposure to the chemicals, heat, and stress in the firefighting operations.

○ **Behavioral Health**

- Very active since inception in early 2016.
- Sub-Committee consists of Assistant Chief Will Anderson (Euclid), Assistant Chief Mike Caudill (Dayton), and Captain Darian Edwards (Colerain Twp.).
- Working together, these men have focused their efforts on three areas:
  - To create a plan to identify and minimize knowledge gaps relating to firefighter behavioral health;
  - To understand the true nature of the firefighter behavioral health problem in Ohio;
  - To provide resources to chiefs so they can effectively deal with these sensitive issues.
- To date, projects include:
  - Data collection and the creation of two surveys. One was designed for fire chiefs and the other for firefighters. As a result, 134 chiefs and 529 firefighters from Ohio participated. Thanks must go to Jim Carney of the OAPFF for his strong support of the survey.
    - Survey will be sent to OSFA members once their website has been updated
  - These surveys provided valuable information on the conditions, actions, and needs of the respondents.
    - Of the 134 chiefs who participated in the survey, 60 requested (and received) information about behavioral health resources.
  - Please see the end of this report for a summary of both OFCA and OAPFF surveys.

○ **PPE**

- The PPE Sub-Committee is currently monitoring the NFPA review of 1500 and 1582.
- The PPE work group leader (B/C David Bernzweig) is the Task Group Chair for NFPA 1500.
- Based on some committee discussion, Chief Bernzweig was going to follow-up on some wording change.
- One of the PPE work group goals is to collect a variety of policies and best practices, making them available to members.

○ **Administration/Policy**

- Make an online resource library available to members.
- Met with Ohio BWC.
  - Key points from meeting include:
    - Collaboration between groups is most important
    - Training videos discussing common injuries and prevention

- Focus on EMS duty injuries
- Discussed and received BWC perspective on SB 27 Presumptive Cancer.
- Currently working to establish additional meetings.
- Additional Accomplishments:
  - Two committee members attended the NFA Safety Program Operations
  - Two committee members will be attending the NFFF's Fire Service Technology Summit in late July

### **Safety, Health, & Wellness Committee:**

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## OFCA Safety, Health, & Wellness Committee

### Behavioral Health Sub-Committee Survey Results: By the Numbers

March-May 2016

- I. **OFCA** member survey results (134 total respondents)
  - A. **61.9%** - Percentage of 134 respondents who feel they don't have the knowledge or resources to effectively handle a behavioral health issue within their department
  - B. **71.2%** - Percentage of 132 respondents who have experienced a behavioral health issue within their department
  - C. Top 5 behavioral health issues encountered by 95 respondents:
    - a. **62.1%** have experienced personnel with depression
    - b. **56.8%** have experienced personnel with substance abuse
    - c. **48.4%** have experienced personnel with anxiety
    - d. **34.7%** have experienced a physical altercation between firefighters
    - e. **21.1%** have experienced cases of domestic violence/assault
  - D. **22** – Number of firefighter suicides encountered by 95 respondents
  - E. **77.1%** of 131 respondents have utilized a critical incident stress management team
  - F. Respondents (130 total) by OFCA District:
    - a. **41** – Northwest
    - b. **37** – Northeast
    - c. **16** – North Central
    - d. **16** – South Central
    - e. **15** – Southwest
    - f. **5** – Southeast

- II. **OAPFF** member survey results (529 total respondents); Committee member and OSFA President Mark Resanovich advised of OSFA website upgrade; when completed, the OSFA will send the survey out to their membership.
- A. **82.4%** - percentage of 527 respondents who are aware of firefighter behavioral health issues
  - B. **78.9%** - percentage of 525 respondents who know someone in their department who has had behavioral health issues due to on-the-job experiences
  - C. **47.5%** - percentage of 524 respondents who know another firefighter who has committed or attempted suicide
  - D. **80.1%** - percentage of 522 respondents who feel their City/FD administration (chief's, HR, etc.) does not have the resources and/or training to effectively deal with behavioral health issues
  - E. Confidence rating of 522 respondent's immediate supervisor to know which behavioral health resources are available and how to access those resources:
    - a. **32.9%** - Somewhat confident
    - b. **22.2%** - Somewhat unconfident
    - c. **20.7%** - No confidence
    - d. **18.4%** - Confident
    - e. **5.8%** - Very confident
  - F. **83.1%** - percentage of 520 respondents who are provided an employee assistance program
  - G. **61.8%** - percentage of 524 respondents who have been through a critical incident stress management debriefing
  - H. Breakdown of how helpful the debriefing was by 346 respondents:
    - a. **37.6%** - somewhat helpful
    - b. **33.5%** - not helpful
    - c. **28.9%** - helpful
  - I. Respondents (523 total) by OFCA District:
    - a. 172 – Northeast
    - b. 156 – Southwest
    - c. 75 – North Central
    - d. 51 - Northwest
    - e. 48 – South Central
    - f. 21 - Southeast