



THE SACRIFICE DIDN'T END **ON 9/11.**

A national campaign from the Firefighter Cancer Support Network marking twenty five years since September 11, 2001. Running September 1 through September 30, 2026.

REMEMBER SCREEN SUPPORT

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[THESACRIFICECONTINUES.COM](https://thesacrificecontinues.com)

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25TH ANNIVERSARY

WHAT THIS CAMPAIGN IS.

The Firefighter Cancer Support Network marks the 25th anniversary of September 11, 2001 with a month-long national campaign about what came after. It is not a fundraising drive. It is a campaign about early detection, and about the first national firefighter cancer screening recommendations, which FCSN is building now.

CAMPAIGN	The Sacrifice Didn't End on 9/11
HASHTAG	#TheSacrificeContinues
ONLINE	thesacrificecontinues.com
RUNS	Tuesday, September 1 through Wednesday, September 30, 2026
PEAK	Monday, September 7 through Friday, September 11, 2026, the 25th anniversary itself
FORMAT	Daily social content Monday through Friday, with a firefighter telling their own story released every Friday
LED BY	Firefighter Cancer Support Network, a 501(c)(3) founded by firefighters in 2005

REMEMBER.

Tell the stories of the people still paying for that day, in their own words.

SCREEN.

Early detection is the difference. Push for screening built for this profession.

SUPPORT.

Stand with firefighters and their families through diagnosis, treatment, and after.

ABOUT THE FIREFIGHTER CANCER SUPPORT NETWORK

For more than two decades, the Firefighter Cancer Support Network (FCSN) has stood beside firefighters and their families throughout the cancer journey. Founded by firefighters in 2005, FCSN supports firefighters and EMS providers (career or volunteer, active or retired) and their families, while working nationally to increase cancer awareness, advance prevention and early detection, and improve outcomes across the fire service. FCSN is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and its cancer awareness and prevention education program is award-winning.

ONE THING TO KNOW

This is first and foremost an awareness campaign, focused on the importance of cancer screening and early detection for firefighters.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER, THE SACRIFICE CONTINUES.

THE 9/11 STORY

As of June 30, 2026, the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program was caring for 145,275 responders and survivors. Over the life of the program, 57,044 members have had a cancer certified as a WTC-related health condition. Cancer was not originally among the conditions covered by the program; it was added in 2012 as evidence of the long-term health effects of World Trade Center exposure continued to emerge. Within the FDNY alone, more than 400 members have since died from World Trade Center-related illnesses, **surpassing the 343 FDNY members killed on September 11, 2001.**

THE FIRE SERVICE STORY

The sacrifice did not end on September 11.

September 11 did not create firefighter cancer. It made it impossible to ignore.

- In the 12 months ending June 30, 2026, the World Trade Center (WTC) Health Program recorded 10,393 WTC-related cancer certifications, 4,631 among responders and 5,762 among survivors, more than 28 every day.
- The danger extends throughout the fire service: a National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study of nearly 30,000 career firefighters found 9% more cancer diagnoses and 14% more cancer deaths than expected based on U.S. population rates.
- In 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer classified occupational exposure as a firefighter as carcinogenic to humans, Group 1.
- And according to the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), 247 of the 311 IAFF members honored at the IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial in September 2025, 79.4%, died of occupational cancer. Occupational cancer is the leading cause of line-of-duty death among IAFF members.

Personal protective equipment, or PPE, is how the fire service has always answered a known hazard. One retired deputy chief puts screening in the same category.

“We wear our PPE to protect ourselves on the fireground. Annual cancer screenings are the PPE that protect us after we have signed back into quarters.”

KEVIN D. QUINN, RETIRED DEPUTY CHIEF, 51ST YEAR IN THE FIRE SERVICE. THREE CANCERS FOUND AT A FREE SCREENING IN APRIL 2025 AND REMOVED WITH CLEAR MARGINS.

WHY FCSN, AND WHY NOW

For over two decades FCSN has stood beside firefighters through diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. That experience gives FCSN a firsthand understanding of both the human toll of occupational cancer and why earlier detection matters so much. The 25th anniversary is the moment the country is already looking back. **FCSN is using it to look forward.**

The organization is now leading the National Initiative for Firefighter Cancer Screening Recommendations, a first of its kind effort to write screening recommendations built for this profession rather than for the general population. Rollout begins in 2027.

343 WAS NEVER THE FINAL COUNT.

Cancer was not a covered condition when the World Trade Center Health Program began. It was added in 2012 as the long-term consequences of exposure became undeniable.

343

FDNY members killed on September 11, 2001.

More than 400

FDNY members who have died since from World Trade Center (WTC) related illnesses, surpassing the number lost on September 11 itself.

57,044

WTC Health Program members who have had cancer certified as a WTC-related health condition over the life of the Program, including members who have since died or are no longer enrolled.

10,393

Cancer certifications during the 12 months ending June 30, 2026. 4,631 among responders and 5,762 among survivors.

FOR REPORTERS

The FDNY count will move during the anniversary week. The FDNY adds names to its World Trade Center Memorial Wall each September, usually between the 8th and the 11th. The approved campaign language reads “more than 400” for that reason. Confirm the current figure with the FDNY before publication.

Source: World Trade Center Health Program quarterly program statistics, data through June 30, 2026. FDNY World Trade Center Memorial Wall.

NOBODY EVER WROTE THE GUIDELINES FOR THIS JOB.

The National Initiative for Firefighter Cancer Screening Recommendations is a first of its kind effort to change that.

Led by the Firefighter Cancer Support Network, it brings together leading experts in oncology, occupational medicine, epidemiology, firefighter health, and the fire service to develop evidence-based, firefighter specific screening recommendations designed to improve early detection and save lives.

Rather than replacing the role of medical organizations, FCSN serves as the catalyst that unites researchers, clinicians, fire service leaders, and stakeholders to develop recommendations that are scientifically rigorous, broadly supported, and practical for firefighters nationwide.

BUILT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Age-based. Risk averaged across the general population.

Existing national cancer screening recommendations are designed for the general public. They do not account for the unique occupational exposures firefighters face over the course of their careers, or how early those exposures can begin.

BUILT FOR FIREFIGHTERS

Until now, no national set of firefighter-specific cancer screening recommendations has existed.

Firefighters can face occupational exposures beginning on their first day on the job, yet today's screening recommendations are largely based on age and general-population risk. That is the gap this initiative is designed to close.

RECOMMENDATIONS, NOT GUIDELINES. THE DISTINCTION IS DELIBERATE.

What publishes in 2027 are evidence-informed recommendations. FCSN's Health and Wellness Advisory Council is unanimous on the point: "guidelines" implies a standard of evidence and validation that firefighter-specific screening has not yet reached. Recommendations are the honest starting point, and they carry the flexibility to evolve as the evidence base is built. Building that evidence base is the longer-term goal.

WHY IT MATTERS

Exposure cannot be undone. Detection can be moved earlier.

FIVE FIREFIGHTERS. THEIR OWN WORDS.

Each recorded their own story. A new one is released every Friday in September, and all five appear in the campaign montage. **Listed in release order.**

RELEASES FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

GREG LEITZ

Division Chief (Ret.), Spotsylvania Fire Rescue, Virginia. More than four decades in the fire service, starting as a junior firefighter at 13. Diagnosed in January 2024 with stage 4 metastatic Gleason 9 prostate cancer, treated at VCU Massey Comprehensive Cancer Center, and with no detectable disease since September 2024.

RELEASES FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

MIKE O'CONNELL

Retired FDNY Lieutenant. Responder and advocate. Sworn into the FDNY in 2001 after three years with the NYPD. He was in the fire academy in June 2001 when the Father's Day Fire killed three FDNY members. Three months later 343 died. He responded on September 11 at 25 years old with Ladder 129 and worked the site in the weeks that followed. He has spent the 25 years since advocating in Washington so that nobody made sick by that day is left behind.

RELEASES FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

MATTHEW EMBREY

Division Chief (Ret.), Spotsylvania County, Virginia. 34 years in fire and rescue, starting at 16 as a junior firefighter. Retired in July 2022 as Division Chief of Emergency Management and Logistics. A fire service cancer survivor, and an FCSN District Representative.

RELEASES FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

KEVIN D. QUINN

Retired Deputy Chief, Union Fire District, South Kingstown, Rhode Island. In his 51st year in the fire service. Immediate Past Chairman of the National Volunteer Fire Council and a director for more than 45 years, board member of the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and the Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition. Screened free at FDIC International in April 2025, where three areas were flagged. Biopsies in December 2025 came back cancerous on all three, and three procedures in January 2026 removed them with clear margins.

CAMPAIGN MONTAGE

MICHAEL CONN

FCSN Utah State Director, Captain, Unified Fire Authority. A Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma survivor who now leads FCSN's work across Utah, supporting firefighters and their families through diagnosis and treatment.

A REQUEST TO REPORTERS

Please describe how each person's cancer was found and treated rather than asserting what caused it. The population-level risk figures in this kit are sourced and cleared for use. A claim that one named individual's diagnosis was caused by the job is a clinical judgment that none of these subjects has made. Mike O'Connell has not stated a cancer diagnosis and should not be described as a cancer survivor.

WHAT YOU CAN USE, AND WHEN.

QUOTATIONS

Cleared now. The Kevin D. Quinn quotation on page 02 may be used immediately, in print, online, and on air. Please carry the attribution as written.

Released on the post date. Quotations from Matthew Embrey, Greg Leitz, and Michael Conn come from their recorded interviews and become available with that subject's video on its September release date.

On request. Quotations from Mike O'Connell are being confirmed against his full statement and are supplied on request. An attributable statement from FCSN leadership is issued with the national press release.

MEDIA ASSETS

All at thesacrificecontinues.com. Nothing requires a login.

- Campaign mark, full color, transparent PNG
- Firefighter Cancer Support Network logo family
- Fact Sheets 01 to 05, as PDFs
- Department and partner toolkit
- Story videos, plus the campaign montage, vertical cutdowns, and captioned versions

Story videos release on Fridays September 4, 11, 18, and 25. Which subject lands on which Friday is on page 05.

CAMPAIGN LINES CLEARED FOR HEADLINE USE

The Sacrifice Didn't End on 9/11. · The fires went out. The exposure did not.

343 was never the final count. · Nobody ever wrote the guidelines for this job.

September 11 did not create firefighter cancer. It made it impossible to ignore.

THE NATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

The national release is written and issued by DCI on behalf of FCSN, so there is one authoritative version and one issuing source. It is not reproduced here. **Approved Friday, August 28 and distributed Tuesday, September 1, 2026.**

The backgrounder on page 02 and the figures on page 03 are approved and may be quoted now. Advance access to story videos, interviews, and the montage is available for embargoed coverage. Contact DCI.

USAGE TERMS

FCSN grants use of these assets for editorial coverage of this campaign. Credit as Firefighter Cancer Support Network. Please do not recolor, crop, or otherwise alter the campaign mark, and please do not use campaign footage in a way that implies an individual's cancer was caused by the job. Media contacts for DCI and FCSN are on the cover of this kit.

A NOTE ON STATISTICS

Figures in this kit come from the World Trade Center Health Program quarterly program summary with data through June 30, 2026, a NIOSH cohort study of nearly 30,000 career firefighters, IARC Monographs Volume 132 (2022), and IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial data, September 2025 (iaff.org). Several older firefighter cancer figures still circulate widely and are not supported by the research they are attributed to. FCSN asks that reporters use the sourced figures in this kit.



REMEMBER. SCREEN. SUPPORT.

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