

Talking Points for IAFF Affiliates on the National League of Cities/TriData Report

About the report:

- If you believe smoking cigarettes doesn't cause cancer, or if you believe nicotine isn't addictive, then you can believe the National League of Cities' propaganda.
- The NLC and TriData are taking a page right out of the playbook once used by the tobacco industry with this piece of fiction, which said for years that there's no "proof" that cigarette smoking causes cancer.
- The tobacco industry was **dead wrong** – and so is the League of Cities and its propaganda.
- The tobacco industry stubbornly refused to acknowledge the mountains of research that said cigarette smoking is a cause of cancer, even while people were dying. The NLC is going back to the future – refusing to acknowledge the mountains of epidemiological research that says the toxins fire fighters are exposed to when they rush into burning buildings cause a number of different cancers, even while our members die of the disease in numbers that are vastly higher than workers in other occupations.
- Because the inherent risks in fire fighting cannot be completely mitigated by engineering controls, administrative measures or personal protective equipment, the result is frequent toxic exposures that have been found to correlate fire fighters with a significantly higher incidence of many cancers. Denying fire fighters a safety net in the event they contract one of those cancers because of their work saving lives and property is abandoning those who have sacrificed for this state and community. It's wrong.
- The NLC and TriData report is flawed in every way, and their so-called conclusions are pure fabrications.
- The NLC's rhetoric that conclusive evidence is "lacking to demonstrate a causal relationship between fire fighting and cancer" is not supported by the findings of its own study.
- The NLC/TriData paper uses a subjective and highly questionable methodology to review the literature on cancer among fire fighters. It reviewed only hand-selected articles from the arbitrarily determined period of 1995-2008 and relied on narrative review methods to draw conclusions. Narrative reviews are particularly prone to bias and are widely considered inferior to quantitative review methods.
- The study spends an inordinate amount of discussion on the potential "cost" of presumptive laws involving cancer, yet the authors provide no cost data to back up their claims.

Point-Counterpoint

What they say: “A study released titled “Assessing State Firefighter Cancer Presumption Laws and Current Firefighter Cancer Research,” found there is inadequate scientific research to determine a link between working as a fire fighter and an elevated risk of contracting cancer. In the report, researchers from TriData Corporation independently concluded there is a lack of substantive scientific evidence currently available to determine that fire fighters face risks greater than the general population.”

What we say: Tobacco companies said for years that the medical research was wrong, but it was a public relations ploy. So, if you believe smoking cigarettes doesn't significantly raise your chances of contracting certain types of cancer, believe the NLC study.

If you believe the scientific research, there is a significant body of evidence supporting the correlation between fire fighting and cancer. Legislators in 28 states and seven provinces in Canada have weighed the medical evidence and created responsible presumptive laws. To claim that there is no correlation or that there is no evidence supporting the correlation between fire fighting and cancer is wrong. The NLC and TriData are spreading bald-faced lies.

What they say: “While we depend on fire fighters for the critical role they play in the safety of our cities and towns, we must evaluate this issue objectively and scientifically,” said Donald J. Borut, executive director of the National League of Cities. He continued, “This study demonstrates the need for more high-level research into cancer and fire fighters. States should not pass laws requiring cities to take on difficult financial burdens with no clear scientific connection between illness and occupation. We suggest that all involved – legislators, governors, cities and fire fighters – review this report and consider its findings as they discuss this difficult issue.”

What we say: Because of sound medical research, this is what we know – cigarette smoke significantly increases a person's chances of contracting lung disease, and the toxic smoke fire fighters breathe and are exposed to as an inevitable result of their work places them at an increased risk for many cancers. The scientific evidence already exists. Just because the NLC doesn't accept the sound conclusions of medical researchers, it doesn't get to fabricate new conclusions.

About the National League of Cities:

The League of Cities is no friend to fire fighters. Then NLC has fought every single piece of presumptive legislation that the IAFF has worked to pass on behalf of fire fighters. It's not surprising that they would make another desperate attempt to question the correlation between fighting fires and fire fighters developing cancers at alarmingly high rates from the toxins to which they are exposed when doing their job.

The NLC's motives are clear. The question now is, are you going to join its parade, ignore the real science and shirk the responsibility this jurisdiction has to provide fire fighters and their families the safety net they need when they develop cancer from protecting their community with no questions asked?

About TriData:

TriData is bought and paid for. It has a history of writing whatever its clients pay to write.

NLC told TriData what conclusion it wanted to reach – that’s how TriData reached its conclusions, ignoring and misrepresenting years of landmark cancer research.

TriData has no medical expertise. None. Look at what medical researchers have said on the link between fire fighting and cancer – they say the link is real. (*Use Bibliography of Citations*)