Decades of research shows that firefighters face an increased risk of developing cancer due to occupational exposures. **In fact, cancer is a leading cause of firefighter deaths in the U.S.** Fortunately, research has also shown that there are steps that can be taken to reduce those risks. It is time to change the culture to cut out cancer.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Treat every fire as a hazardous materials call - because it is.**
- Wear SCBA through all stages of firefighting, including overhaul.
- Perform gross decontamination whenever leaving fire operations, preferably before removing your regulator.
- **Bunker gear protects against heat – not carcinogens.** In rehab, use wet wipes to remove toxic soot from your head, face, neck, underarms, and hands.
- **“Shower Within the Hour”** – or as soon as possible after the incident.
- Change and wash uniform clothing, including hood, immediately upon returning to the station.
- Ensure that all gear and apparatus are properly cleaned after the fire. Switch to B-Set gear, if available.
- Keep gear out of living and sleeping areas.
- Do not take contaminated clothing home or store in a vehicle.
- Report every exposure using personnel injury tracking systems.
- Participate in annual medical surveillance. **Early detection leads to better outcomes!**