

Fire Service Health Assessment and Cancer Screening

Results and Recommendations

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The Burden of Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke Exposure in NC

Tobacco use is the #1 cause of preventable death in North Carolina (and the U.S.)

Smoking causes more deaths each year than these causes combined:



1 in 5
Deaths in NC due to tobacco use

For every death, **30** sick or disabled



Smoking – The Cancer Trigger

Smoking is now known to cause **13** different types of cancer—almost everywhere in the body.

30% of NC cancer deaths are tobacco-related

NC is ranked **13th** in the nation in cancer deaths from smoking

DISEASES AND HEALTH PROBLEMS LINKED TO SMOKING

1 OUT OF 3 CANCER DEATHS COULD BE PREVENTED

SMOKING CAUSES CANCER

—IN THE—

- LUNGS • TRACHEA
- BRONCHUS • ESOPHAGUS
- ORAL CAVITY • LIP
- NASOPHARYNX
- NASAL CAVITY • LARYNX
- STOMACH • BLADDER
- PANCREAS • KIDNEY
- LIVER • UTERINE CERVIX
- COLON AND RECTUM

AND CAUSES LEUKEMIA

Smoking can cause cancer almost anywhere in the body.

LUNG

KIDNEY

PANCREAS

LIVER

BLADDER

COLON



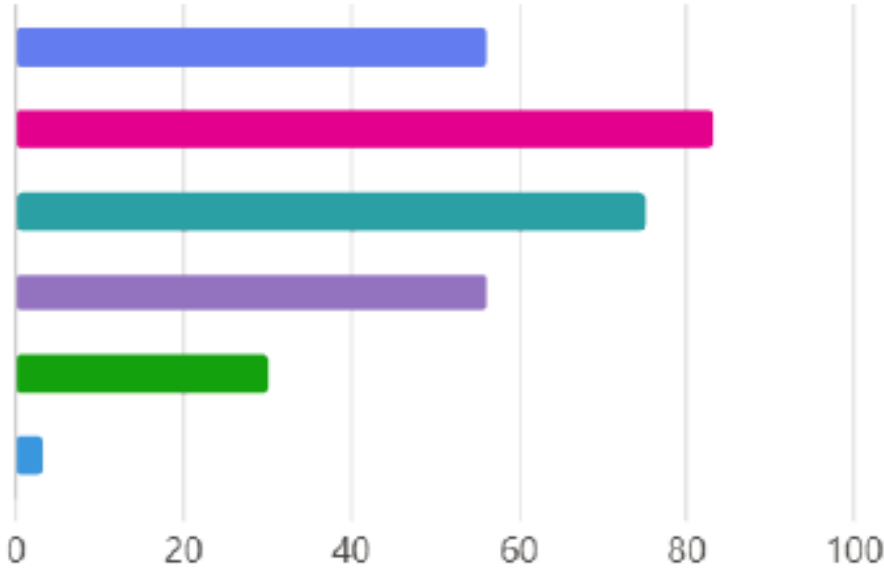
Background

**Survey was sent to all Firefighters in Wake County
including Raleigh and Cary**

Received 302 responses to the survey

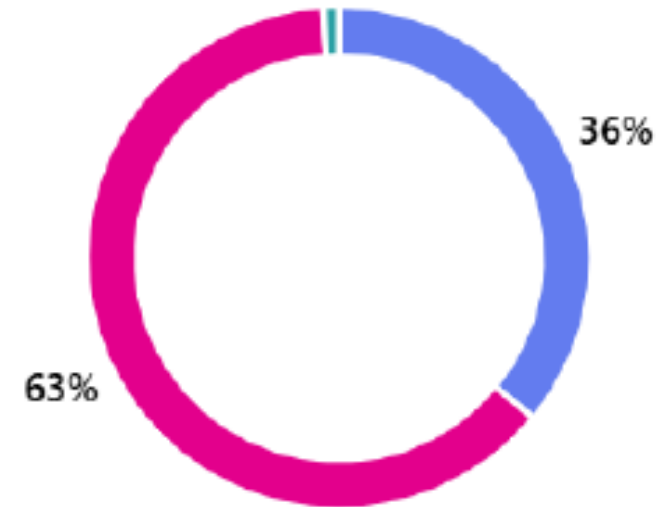
Age Range

● 25 or younger	56
● 26-35	83
● 36-45	75
● 46-55	56
● 55-66	30
● 66 or older	3

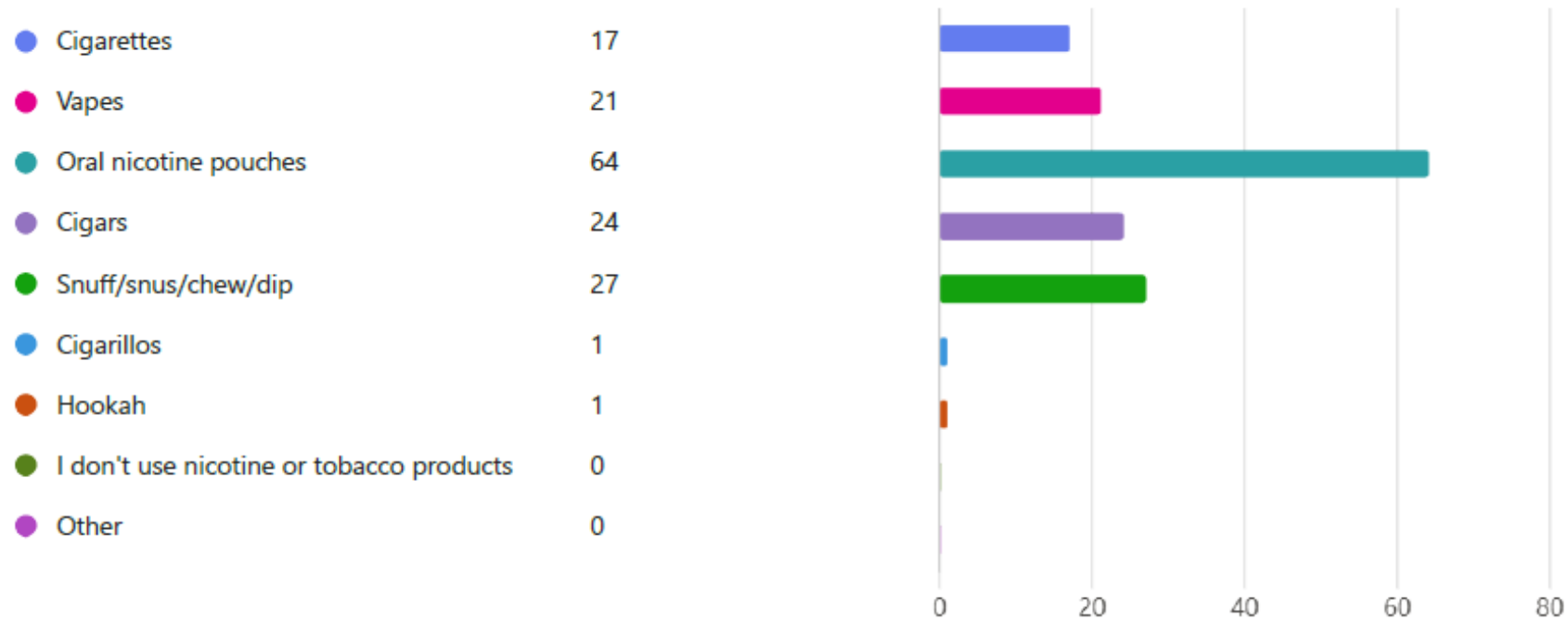


Do you use any nicotine or tobacco products?

● Yes	109
● No	191
● Maybe	3



What products do you use?





Tanks & Mods Rechargeable e-cigarette Disposable e-cigarette



High Light OFFICE 4

4000 PUFFS RECHARGEABLE 20 FLAVORS

CIGS IN AN E-CIG

1 Pack of Cigarettes
= -22mg of Nicotine



~20
CIGARETTES

1 JUUL Pod
= -41.3mg of Nicotine



~37
CIGARETTES

1 Flum Float
= -400mg of Nicotine



~363
CIGARETTES

1 Elf Bar
= -650mg of Nicotine



~590
CIGARETTES

Oral Nicotine Pouches





TOBACCO

Nicotine Pouches: Tobacco's Fast-Growing Subcategory

How a segment that didn't exist 3 years ago is shaking things up behind the counter

By *Hannah Prokop* on Oct. 16, 2020







ZERO TOBACCO™ NICOTINE



CINNAMON CITRUS CHILL SPEARMINT COOL MINT WINTERGREEN

SHOP NOW

POUCHES
12MG / MANGO

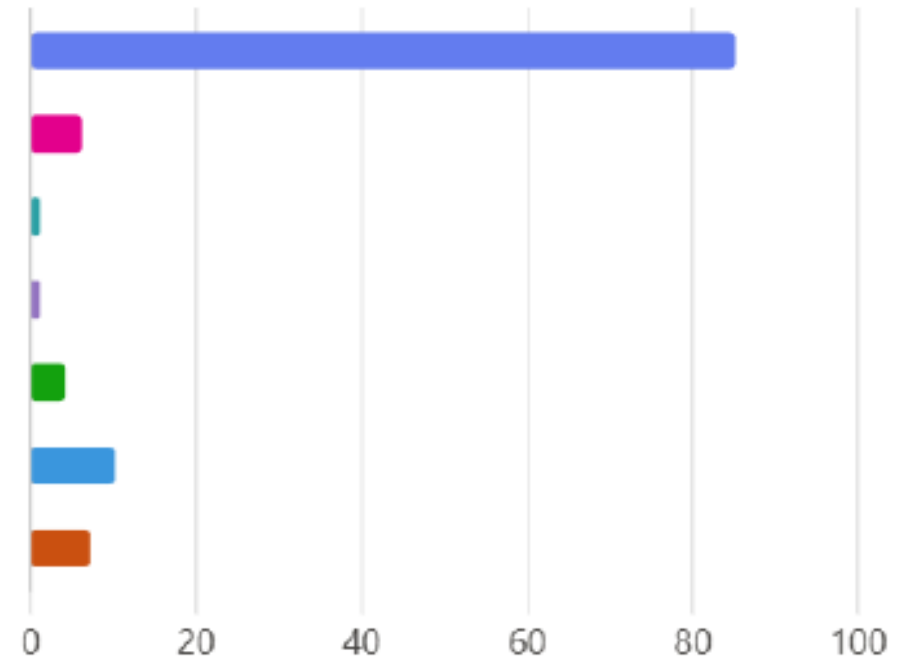
SHOP NOW

BREAKERS
4MG / MINT



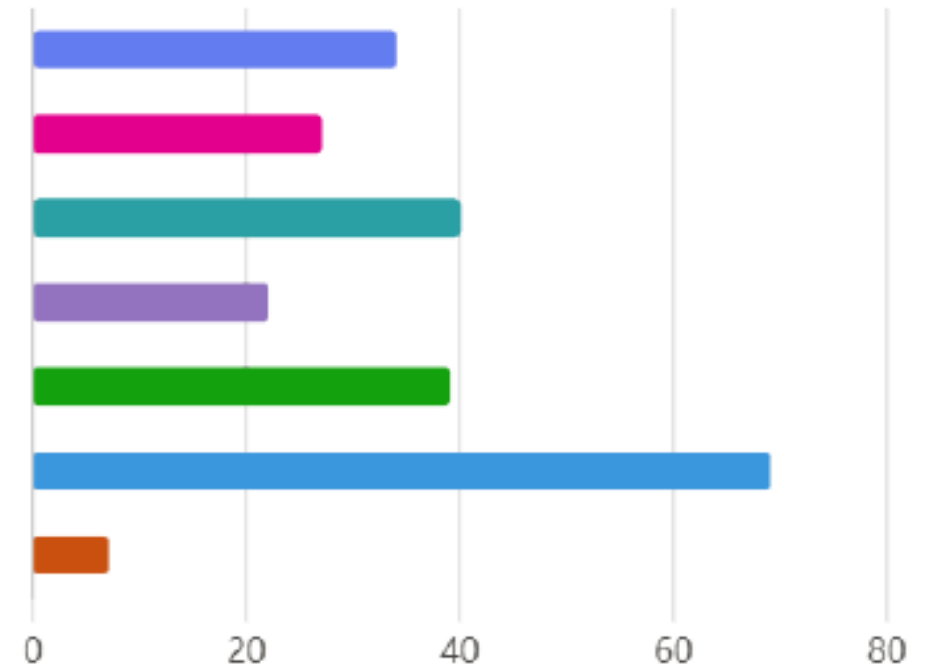
How often do you use tobacco products?

● Multiple times a day	85
● Once a day	6
● Once or twice a week	1
● Three or more times a week	1
● Once or twice a month	4
● Special occasions only	10
● Other	7



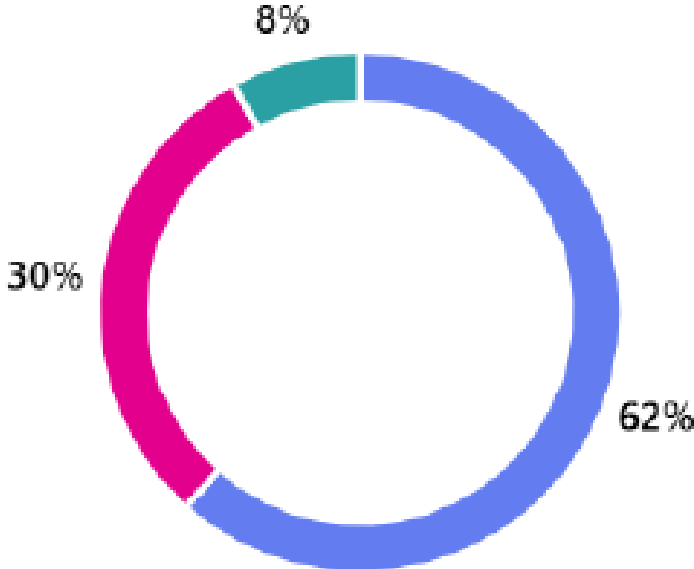
When do you use tobacco products?

● Within one hour of waking up	34
● Before work	27
● Before or after meals	40
● Before bed	22
● Social settings	39
● Throughout the day/continuous	69
● Other	7



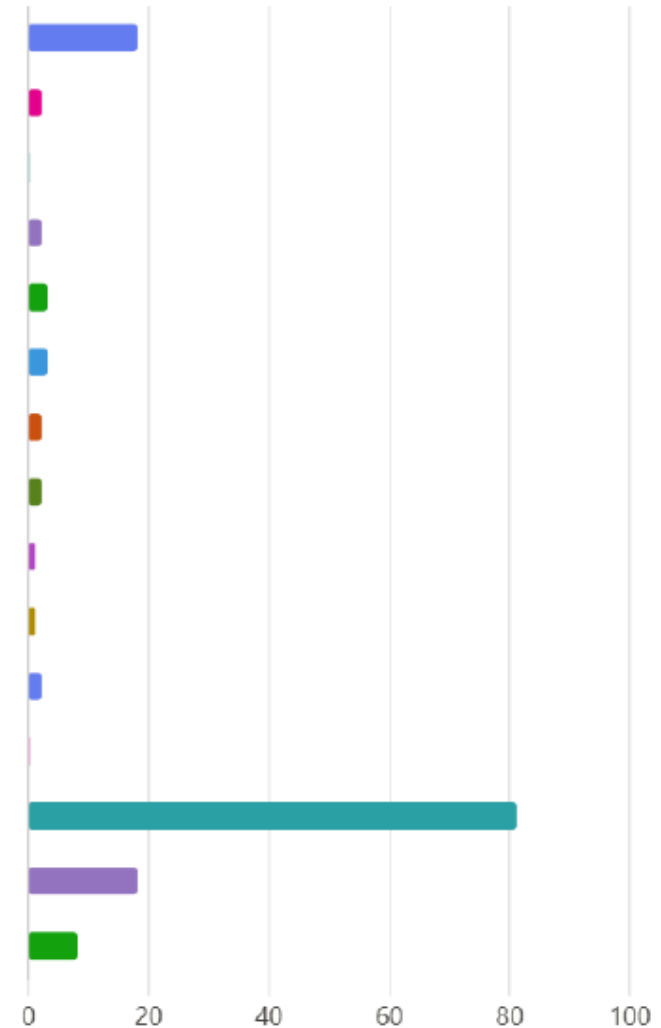
Have you ever attempted to quit using tobacco?

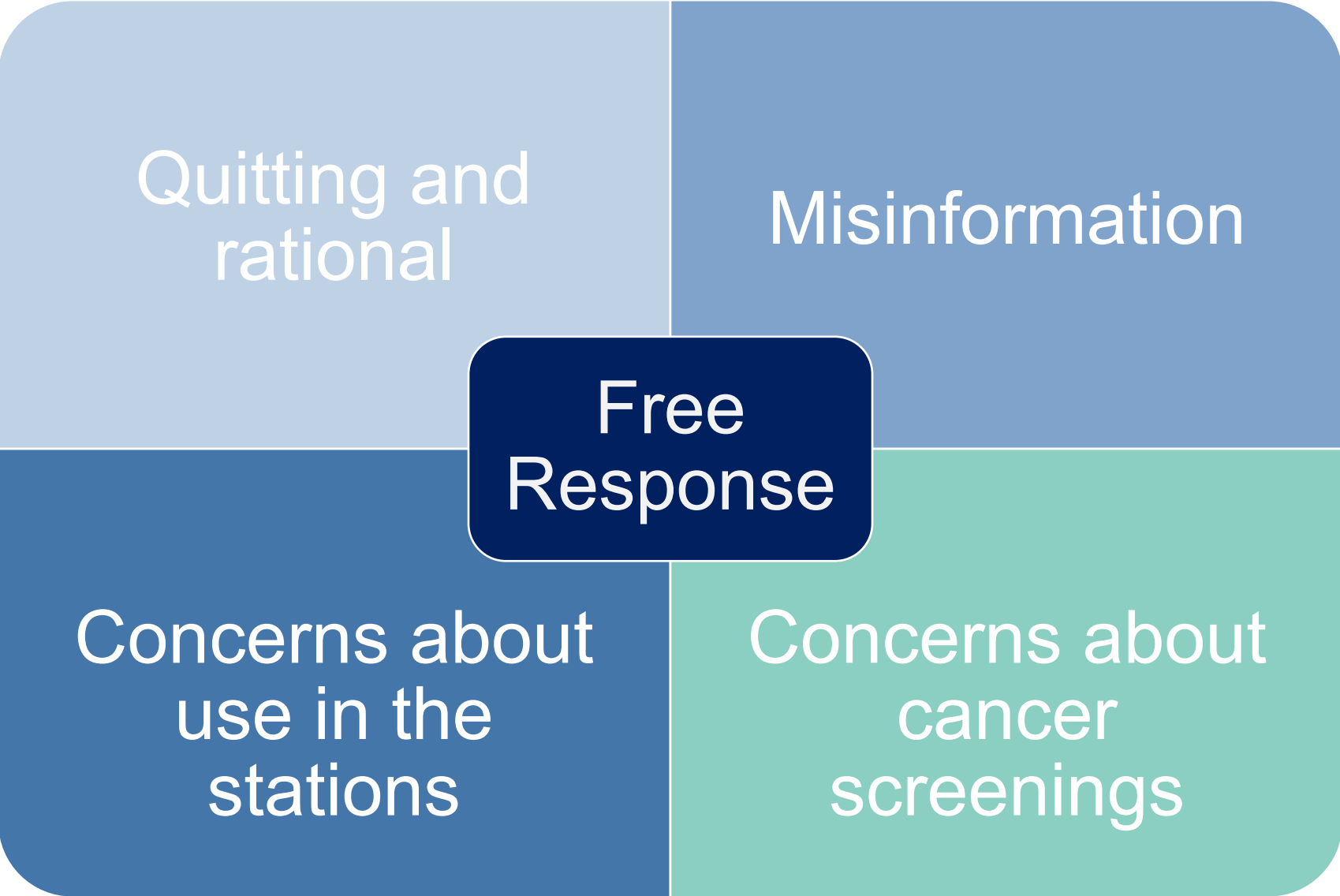
● Yes	69
● No	34
● Maybe	9



Where did you seek help?

● Doctor, nurse, or healthcare provider	18
● Religious leader	2
● Teacher or school counselor	0
● Health department	2
● Wellness facility	3
● Workplace program/ Insurance company	3
● Pharmacist	2
● Dentist or dental hygienist	2
● Free Quitline (1-800-Quit-Now)	1
● Quitline website www.quitlinenc.com	1
● Therapist or counselor	2
● Coach or sports leader	0
● Cold turkey/ no help	81
● Friends and family	18
● Other	8





Quitting

"I used dip from age 12 to 40, then quit cold turkey. I smoked occasionally during that time. Upon my marriage separation and divorce 5 years ago I began smoking occasionally, one of my coworkers smoked. My use has increased somewhat since then, mostly at work."

- FF who have quit altogether
- FF who have quit in the past but are now back to smoking
- FF who have quit cigarettes but now use other forms
- FF not interested in quitting

"Quit tobacco after 18 years. Quit nicotine for 13 years but started back with Zyn pouches. Would like to know or see more health studies on these tobacco free pouches"

"I used to dip for about 3 years when I first got in the fire service from around 16-19 but have stopped for the last 13 years"

Quitting supports Overall Mental Health



- Anxiety, depression, stress levels are lower
- Quality of life and positive mood improve
- Dosage of some medications used to treat mental health can be reduced
- Improved levels of oxygen in the body means better concentration
- Those with a behavioral health condition who quit tobacco can gain an average of **25 years of life**

Use in the station

"Several do - in & around the fire station - especially vape products chiefs are aware but choose not to act"

"I'll support any efforts to end tobacco and nicotine usage in our stations."

"Smoking, while 'banned' is still allowed inside the fire station, as captains & chiefs willfully ignore it's use"

"Never smoked but have been subjected to second hand smoke in the past from other employees. Mostly before smoking rules were really implemented. Even now where smokers have to go to designated areas or to the edge of the property. If the smoker is a captain or someone with some rank and they need to talk to an employee, they'll say to that person "come out here so we can talk" and then your exposed to the second hand smoking."

Misinformation



“Although there are negative effects of some forms of nicotine delivery, there have been many studies that nicotine that shows positive effects to your body, such as increased brain function or better memory, or a sense of relaxation. Yes nicotine is addictive and I cannot argue that, but so is many other additives and toxins we intake daily that we may not realize!”



“Nicotine is a stimulant like coffee, and allows for more focus during stressful times. I believe it is not bad for you in moderation.”



“The use of tobacco products is more than just being addicted to them. For many it helps with our anxiety and PTSD. There are many of us who not only suffer from it from the fire service but also from years of military service also.”

Cancer screening concerns

"Cancer screening benefit would be great"

"Precancer screenings are important and a necessary next step for firefighters. Hopeful they will gain funding to assist the battle in cancer prevention"

"I would really like to express that we should have more and deeper screening (blood work, urine samples) done throughout the year to try and prevent or catch cancer in its early stages"

Cancer screening concerns continued

“It is inappropriate to use tobacco use as a reason to avoid providing comprehensive cancer screenings for firefighters. While tobacco use is an important health consideration, it should not be used as a barrier to early detection and prevention efforts. Many cancers linked to occupational exposure in the fire service can be successfully treated if caught early, regardless of tobacco history. Implying that firefighters are solely responsible for their health risks due to tobacco use while ignoring known job-related exposures is both misleading and counterproductive. A more balanced, supportive approach would improve trust and health outcomes across the fire service.”

Suggestions



PEER SUPPORT
GROUPS



EDUCATION
AROUND
EMERGING
NICOTINE
PRODUCTS



QUITTING
RESOURCES



SUPPORT
FROM
LEADERSHIP

Questions?

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