



May 15, 2017

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Health

FROM: Committee Majority Staff

RE: Hearing entitled “Examining Initiatives to Advance Public Health”

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

On Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at 10:15 a.m. in 2322 Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Health will hold a hearing entitled “Examining Initiatives to Advance Public Health.”

## **II. WITNESSES**

The Subcommittee will hear from the following witnesses:

- Kevin O’Connor, Assistant to the General President, International Association of Fire Fighters;
- Cheryl D. Watson-Lowry, DDS; American Dental Association
- Martin S. Levine, DO, MPH, FACOFP, dist; Interim Clinical Dean, Professor of Family and Community Medicine, Touro College of Osteopathic Medicine; and
- Jordan Greenbaum, MD; Director, Global Child Health and Well Being Initiative, International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children; Clinical Assistant Professor, Dept of Pediatrics, Emory School of Medicine; Staff Physician, Stephanie Blank Center for Safe and Health Children.

## **III. BACKGROUND**

During this hearing, the Subcommittee will discuss the following legislation:

- H.R. 931, Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2017: This legislation, introduced by Rep. Chris Collins (R-NY), requires the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and maintain a registry to collect data regarding the incidence of cancer in firefighters. This bill has a new authorization of appropriations totaling \$2.5 million a year for five years from FY2018-2022. Epidemiological studies have found a correlation

between firefighters' occupational exposure and cancer.<sup>1,2</sup> These data include the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) study that reviewed health effects in nearly 30,000 career firefighters followed from 1950 through 2009, and found that firefighters are at increased risk for developing cancer.<sup>3</sup>

- H.R. \_\_\_\_\_, Action for Dental Health Act of 2017: This legislation, introduced by Rep. Robin Kelly (D-IL), would reauthorize the oral health promotion and disease prevention programs at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The legislation also permits the CDC to award grants or enter into contracts to collaborate with state, county, or local public officials and other stakeholders to develop projects to improve oral health education, reduce barriers to dental services, and facilitate the provision of dental care to nursing home residents. The legislation authorizes appropriations of \$18 million a year for FY2018-FY2022.
- H.R. 1876, Good Samaritan Health Professionals Act of 2017: This legislation introduced by Rep. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), would shield a health care professional from liability for harm caused by any act or omission if: (1) the professional is serving as a volunteer in response to a disaster and (2) the act or omission occurs during the period of the disaster, in the professional's capacity as a volunteer, and in a good faith belief that the individual being treated is in need of health care services. In 1997, Congress recognized that it was in interest of the Federal Government to encourage the contributions of volunteers through the passage of the Volunteer Protection Act (VPA, Public Law 105-19). The VPA provides civil liability protections to volunteers for acts of ordinary negligence that were committed while volunteering for a qualified nonprofit or governmental organization.<sup>4</sup> The VPA protects those offering medical services in emergencies to the extent that it encourages medical providers to join nonprofits or government entities. However, health practitioners who volunteer on their own are not protected from liability under the VPA.
- H.R. 767, Stop, Observe, Ask and Respond (SOAR) to Health and Wellness Act of 2017: This legislation, introduced by Rep. Steve Cohen (D-TN), would provide health care professionals training on how to identify and appropriately treat human trafficking victims. Worldwide, nearly 21 million people are victims of human trafficking, forced

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<sup>1</sup> LeMasters, G., Genaidy, A., Succop, P., Deddens, J., Sobeih, T., & Barriera-Viruet, H. et al. (2006). Cancer Risk Among Firefighters: A Review and Meta-analysis of 32 Studies. *Journal Of Occupational And Environmental Medicine*, 48(11), 1189-1202. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1097/01.jom.0000246229.68697.90>

<sup>2</sup> Pukkala, E., Martinsen, J., Weiderpass, E., Kjaerheim, K., Lynge, E., & Tryggvadottir, L. et al. (2014). Cancer incidence among firefighters: 45 years of follow-up in five Nordic countries. *Occupational And Environmental Medicine*, 71(6), 398-404. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2013-101803>

<sup>3</sup> Daniels, R., Kubale, T., Yiin, J., Dahm, M., Hales, T., & Baris, D. et al. (2013). Mortality and cancer incidence in a pooled cohort of US firefighters from San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia (1950–2009). *Occupational And Environmental Medicine*, 71(6), 388-397. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2013-101662>.

<sup>4</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration. (2006). *Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP) - Legal and Regulatory Issues* (p. 44). Department of Health and Human Services. <http://www.publichealthlaw.net/Research/PDF/ESAR%20VHP%20Report.pdf>

labor, or sexual exploitation.<sup>5</sup> The Stop, Observe, Ask and Respond (SOAR) pilot initiative was launched in 2013 by the Administration for Children and Families to enhance the health care system's response to human trafficking. This legislation expands and further codifies the SOAR program by requiring the program to work with stakeholders to develop a flexible training module, support training in diverse health care sites, provide technical assistance to health education programs, develop a strategy to incentivize a nationwide protocol, and develop data collection and reporting on the number of trafficking victims served in health care settings. This bill has a new authorization of "such sums as may be necessary" for five years from FY2018-2022.

#### **IV. STAFF CONTACTS**

If you have any questions regarding this hearing, please contact Paul Edattel or Kristen Shatynski of the Committee staff at (202) 225-2927.

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<sup>5</sup> *ILO global estimate of forced labour*. (2012) (1st ed., p. 13). Geneva. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms\\_182004.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_norm/---declaration/documents/publication/wcms_182004.pdf)