



# Virginia Professional Fire Fighters 2025 Legislative Agenda

## CLARIFY THE DEFINITION OF THROAT CANCER COVERED UNDER VIRGINIA §65.2-402

The VPPF urges the Virginia General Assembly to pass legislation to clarify the anatomical definition of throat under the existing presumptive cancer law. A lack of detail has led to firefighters being denied medical coverage.

### BACKGROUND

The existing law under Virginia Workers' Compensation (§65.2-402) titled "Presumption as to death or disability from respiratory disease, hypertension or heart disease, cancer" lists throat as one of the 12 cancers covered under the code. Unfortunately, many physicians classify throat cancer more accurately with anatomical definition. Many firefighters are being diagnosed, and dying from, cancers such as esophageal and oropharyngeal. While physicians testify these are indeed throat cancers, the Virginia Workers' Compensation Commission is denying medical coverage because of the strict interpretation of the code.

This legislation is a technical amendment to further define throat cancer to eliminate unnecessary denials and appeals for those firefighters and their families seeking presumptive coverage for occupational cancers. This legislation would define throat cancer to include any cancer that forms in the tissues of the pharynx and larynx.

### NEEDED ACTION

The General Assembly needs to approve this technical amendment to provide firefighters and their families the medical coverage they deserve under the existing law. This amendment would provide clarity and fulfill both the letter and spirit of the existing law.

### Virginia Professional Fire Fighters Contacts:

Jennifer Pike  
Director of Governmental Affairs  
(276) 614-5100  
jpik@vpff.org

John Wright  
Legislative Chairman  
(540) 647-2290  
jwright@vpff.org



*Proudly representing over 10,000 professional firefighters, paramedics and communications officers across Virginia since 1955.*