

## **Firefighter Safety and Health Conference - Florida Fire Chiefs Association**

**December 6, 2016, Orlando, Florida**

*Accepted for Presentation*

**Presentation Title:** Firefighter wellness and fitness programs in the State of Florida: Practical applications and future directions

### **Presenters:**

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### **Abstract / Brief Description**

Firefighting is a very physically demanding, psychologically taxing, stressful, and dangerous occupation. As a result, cardiovascular events, musculoskeletal injuries, and behavioral health concerns are very common and severely impact the ability of firefighters to protect the community. These health concerns also compromise the long-term health, fitness, and well-being of firefighters throughout their career and into retirement. Each of these health concerns can be responsive to well-designed wellness and fitness programs. The purpose of this presentation is to: 1) discuss the current state of wellness and fitness programs in the fire service including gaps in knowledge and implementation factors, 2) describe firefighter wellness and fitness projects in the Tampa Bay region and how these address gaps in knowledge and implementation, 3) provide evidence-based recommendations and practical applications for improved firefighter wellness and fitness programs across many domains - e.g. injury prevention, physical fitness, nutrition, behavioral health, and overall wellness, 4) provide recommendations for overcoming barriers to implementation, and 5) discuss strategies to improve state-wide and nation-wide firefighter wellness and fitness programs in the future. At the end of this presentation, the attendee will be able to apply the principles learned in order to improve the firefighter wellness and fitness programs at their fire departments.

### **Relevance to firefighter audience**

Firefighters are at high risk for several major health concerns that impact their ability to protect the community and also compromise their long-term health, fitness, and well-being throughout their career and into retirement. Participation in properly designed and evidence-based wellness and fitness programs is critical for firefighters to improve their health, safety, physical fitness, and well-being. This presentation will discuss evidence-based recommendations and practical applications regarding implementation of firefighter wellness and fitness programs at the fire departments.

### **Learning objectives**

The learning objectives of this presentation are to: 1) discuss the current state of wellness and fitness programs in the fire service including gaps in knowledge and implementation factors, 2) describe firefighter wellness and fitness projects in the Tampa Bay region and how these address gaps in knowledge and implementation, 3) provide evidence-based recommendations and practical applications for improved firefighter wellness and fitness programs across many domains - e.g. injury prevention, physical fitness, nutrition, behavioral health, and overall wellness, 4) provide recommendations for overcoming barriers to implementation, and 5) discuss strategies to improve state-wide and nation-wide firefighter wellness and fitness programs in the future. At the end of this presentation, the attendee will be able to apply the principles learned in order to improve the firefighter wellness and fitness programs at their fire departments.