



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kathleen A. Marchione

## Delivering Health Benefits to Volunteer Firefighters

KATHLEEN A. MARCHIONE October 23, 2017

| ISSUE: **FIREFIGHTERS, VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS, FIRST RESPONDERS**



Dear Friend:

Our courageous volunteer firefighters protect and serve their communities and save local governments billions. The brave men and women who put their lives on the line every day and volunteer should not be burdened with unexpected medical bills from illnesses they received while serving on the front lines of fire emergencies.

I am pleased to report that the Governor has signed legislation into state law that delivers health care benefits to volunteer firefighters who have been diagnosed with certain cancers. I continually advocated for, and strongly supported, this important legislation in the State Senate, and I am proud that these courageous New Yorkers will now receive the health benefits they deserve.

Currently, volunteer firefighters are eligible for accidental disability and death benefits through Workers' Compensation if they are injured in the line of duty. Effective January 1, 2019, firefighters will also be eligible for health benefits to support treatment for life-threatening cancers.

Under this new state law, volunteer firefighters who contract certain cancers will receive access to tax-free disability and death benefits. Specifically, volunteer firefighters diagnosed with lung, prostate, breast, lymphatic, hematological, digestive, urinary, neurological, reproductive systems, or melanoma cancer will be automatically eligible for health benefits if:

- Upon entry to volunteer, a physical exam did not show any evidence of the cancers covered by this bill;
- Individuals have at least five years of service fighting fire in the interior of buildings; and
- The firefighter is currently active or within 5 years of his or her last active date.

Our volunteer firefighters are true heroes who sacrifice their time, safety, and health to protect and serve their communities and deserve this essential assistance available in their times of need. With this new measure, we will provide these courageous New Yorkers the protections they need and the peace of mind they deserve. My thanks to all our first responders who protect and serve our state and communities.

Sincerely,

Kathy Marchione

State Senator, 43rd District