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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB374

**Health Insurance – Cancer Screening for Professional Firefighters – Required Coverage
(James “Jimmy” Malone Act)**

Good afternoon, Chair Pena-Melnyk, Vice Chair Cullison and Members of the Health and Government Operations Committee;

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB 374, Health Insurance – Cancer Screenings for Professional Firefighters – Required Coverage. SB 374 requires health insurers, nonprofit health service plans, and health maintenance organizations to cover preventative cancer screenings in line with the latest screening guidelines issued by the International Association of Fire Fighters. SB 374 is the cross-file of HB 459 that passed this Committee and the House by a vote of 140 – 0.

Fire fighters are regularly exposed to many known and unknown chemicals and carcinogens in their line of work, and it has been proven that fire fighters are at risk for cancer and other illnesses at a greater rate than the general population. In 2022, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) reclassified firefighting as carcinogenic to humans, which is IARC’s highest carcinogenic hazard classification.

This issue is personal for many Marylanders, including myself. My friend, former Maryland Delegate James “Jimmy” Malone, for whom we have named this bill, died as a result of brain cancer after a lifetime dedicated to public service, beginning with his time as a professional firefighter. Fire fighters have been found to have a 9% increase in cancer incidence and a 14% increase in cancer mortality compared to the general population, and we owe it to these invaluable first responders to offer covered preventative screenings so that cancer can be detected early, and they can have the best chance of overcoming it.

By requiring coverage for preventative screenings, this legislation will serve fire fighters in our state and reduce the burden of cancer in Maryland.

I respectfully request a “Favorable Report” on SB 374.