0472 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A FIREFIGHTER BURN INJURY AWARENESS PROGRAM

J Woods*, K Hollowed, A Pavlovich, J Shupp *Correspondence: The Burn Center, Washington Hospital Center, 110 Irving Street, NW Room ,3B-55 Washington DC 20010, USA*

10.1136/ip.2010.029215.472

A burn-related injury to a firefighter can result in a few weeks of missed duty, can require months of complex care at a burn center, and can also result in the end of a career. The greater Washington, DC metropolitan area has approximately 13 000 career and volunteer firefighters. The Burn Center at Washington Hospital Center, which serves the metropolitan region, reported treating 108 firefighter burn injuries in 2008. Through a partnership with the District of Columbia Fire Department and The Burn Center at Washington Hospital Center, the DC Firefighters Burn Foundation (DCFFBF) developed a Firefighter Burn Injury Awareness Course. This course is divided into two sections. The first part of the course covers information related to potential occupational hazards. Topics such as limitations of firefighter PPE, building construction, fire behaviour, hose streams, ventilation and the importance of proper training are discussed. This portion of the program also includes a section on burn injuries and utilises case studies of firefighters injured on the job. The second part of this course is taught from a medical perspective and stresses the seriousness of a burn injury. A burn professional details the painstaking journey from the time of injury, through surgery and treatment and on to rehabilitation and reconstruction. This comprehensive program was delivered to all 2400 uniformed members of the DCFD over a one-month period. Since implementation of this program, there has been a 20% decrease in firefighter burn injuries.