



Metropolitan Washington  
**Council of Governments**

# **2026 NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKERS**

If you have yet to register, please use the QR Code below:

March 13, 2026



**Crystal Gateway  
Marriott,  
Arlington, VA**

**\*Full Itinerary on the last page of this document\***

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## DENA ALI



### MORNING KEYNOTE

**8:00 AM – 9:00 AM**

Dena Ali is a Battalion Chief with the Raleigh (NC) Fire Department. She also serves as the program manager of Behavioral Health for the First Responder Center for Excellence. Ali holds a degree from North Carolina State University and an MPA from the University of North Carolina—Pembroke, where her research focused on firefighter suicide. She is an Executive Fire Officer Program graduate through the National Fire Academy. Throughout her career, she has received several awards, including the NC Office of State Fire Marshal Honor, Courage, and Valor Award. She earned this award for her steadfast efforts to bring awareness to firefighter mental health through her vulnerability. Dena is the author of the Fire Engineering bestselling book *Hope out of Darkness ~ A Guide to First Responder Mental Wellness*

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## JOHN TIPPETT



### Track 1: Operational Safety // Tactical Decision Making 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

John Tippett began his fire service career as a volunteer in Montgomery County, Maryland in 1974. He was hired as a career firefighter in Montgomery County in 1976 and spent 33 years serving as a firefighter, company officer, and battalion chief. John was also an adjunct instructor, member (and later task force leader) of Maryland Task Force 1 (FEMA urban search and rescue team) and an integral part of the department's safety office. He retired from MCFRS in 2009 to take a position with the Charleston (SC) Fire Department as its first deputy chief of operations. John spent the next 7 ½ years as the operations deputy, assisting with the rebuilding of the department after the Sofa Super Store Fire. From 2017 to 2018, he served as interim fire chief. He is still actively serving as an assistant chief with the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department in Calvert County, Maryland. From 2018 to 2025, John was the director of fire programs for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation. In that role, John was part of the Foundation's dynamic effort to reduce preventable line of duty deaths. He holds a bachelor's degree in Fire Science and a master's degree in emergency services management. John has worked extensively on firefighter safety initiatives throughout his career, including introducing Crew Resource Management to the fire service and the Fire Fighter Near-Miss Reporting System. He earned his chief fire officer designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence in 2012.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## SIDNEY R. HINDS II, MD, FAAN, COL



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

Dr. Hinds is a retired United States Army officer with over 30 years of military medicine experience. Dr. Hinds is a Co-PI and lead for external collaborations for the Long-term Impact of Military-relevant Brain Injury Consortium-Chronic Effects of Neurotrauma Consortium (LIMBIC-CENC) and Medical Director of the Major League Soccer Players Association (MLSPA). He is a neurologist and nuclear medicine and molecular imaging physician who most recently served as the Deputy Medical Director/Chief Health Equity Officer for the National Football League Players Association and the Vice-president for Brain Health Strategy and Research for Wounded Warrior Project, overseeing the Independence Program, Warrior Care Network, and the Complex Case Coordination services. His last role while on active duty was the DoD Brain Health Research Coordinator for the DoD Blast Injury Research Coordinating Office and as the Medical Advisor to the Principal Assistant for Research and Technology (PAR&T), Medical Research and Materiel Command, FT Detrick, Maryland.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## CHIEF JOHN OATES



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 9:15 AM – 10:00 AM

John is the President and CEO of the International Public Safety Data Institute, the fire service's leader in data and analytics. As CEO, he is responsible for the growth, adoption, and continuous improvement of the NFORS Analytics, Exposure Tracker, and FireCARES programs. Before being appointed I-PSDI CEO in November 2021, John served as Chief of the East Hartford, Connecticut Fire Department for 13 years. Before that, he served in West Hartford, CT, for 20 years, reaching the rank of Battalion Chief. John has a BS from Franklin Pierce University, an MS from Oklahoma State University, is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, and holds numerous professional certifications. He has been an Advocate for the NFFF's Everyone Goes Home Program since the inception of the 16 Firefighter Life Safety Initiatives. He serves the First Responder Center for Excellence as a member of the Behavioral Health Advisory Committee. Chief Oates serves as a member of the NFPA 3000 Active Shooter/Hostile Event Response Technical Committee and the Technical Committee for Safety at Motorsports Venues (NFPA 610). He served as Chairman from 2005 until 2016.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## DANIEL SHAW



### Track 1: Operational Safety // Tactical Decision Making 10:15 AM – 11:00 AM

Dan Shaw has been a student of the fire service since 1992, beginning his career as a volunteer firefighter in Howard County, Maryland. In 1995, he was appointed to the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department in Virginia, where he served for 29 years and held every operational rank within the organization. Prior to his retirement in July 2024, Dan served as the Assistant Chief of Operations. Dan remains actively engaged in advancing the profession through national leadership and research serving on the NFPA 1400 committee, the FDIC Advisory Board, and the Underwriters Laboratories Firefighter Safety Research Institute (UL FSRI). He is a Technical Editor for Fire Engineering Magazine, has authored multiple articles for the publication, and is the co-author of *25 to Survive: Reducing Residential Injuries and Line-of-Duty Deaths*. In 2022, Dan had the distinct honor of serving as the keynote speaker at the Fire Department Instructors Conference (FDIC). He continues to teach, write, and consult with fire departments nationwide, focusing on operational effectiveness, leadership, and firefighter safety. For more information, visit [www.chiefdanshaw.com](http://www.chiefdanshaw.com).

**2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER**

**LT. KENNY MITCHELL JR.**



**Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness**  
**10:15 AM – 11:00 AM**

Lt. Kenny Mitchell Jr. (ret.) is a 23-year fire service veteran and founder of Operation Yellow Tape, an organization supporting first responders and their families through the invisible wounds of traumatic careers. A national speaker and podcast host of The Operation Yellow Tape Podcast, Kenny brings lived experience, leadership, and compassion to conversations around mental health, resilience, and proactive support.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## MEGAN LAUTZ



### **Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac** **10:15 AM – 11:00 AM**

Megan Lautz, MS, RD, CSCS, TSAC-F, is an award-winning Registered Dietitian specializing in first responders. Megan creates realistic nutrition strategies that lead to improved energy levels, better body composition, and reduced stress for first responders. Megan has worked full-time for departments of 1,600+ firefighters since 2017. Megan was the recipient of the ASPDA Trailblazer award, recognizing her work advancing dietetics in public safety. Megan owns RescueRD LLC, which provides custom nutrition programs for departments nationwide.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## JOSHUA BURCHICK



### Track 1: Operational Safety // Tactical Decision Making 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Joshua Burchick is a Captain in the fire service, assigned to a ladder company in central Maryland. Additionally, he has served with the Kentland Volunteer Fire Department in Prince Georges County, MD. He is a trainer for fireground survival, is an ACE certified Peer Fitness Trainer, and is a Level II CrossFit trainer. He began his fire service journey in 2003 and holds a bachelor's degree in public safety leadership from Johns Hopkins University. He is an author, speaker, and podcaster who also runs Forged & Unbroken Fire, a mission to create durable, resilient firefighters through physical, mental, and emotional performance.

# **2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER**

## **KYLIE COURTWRIGHT**



### **Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness** **11:15 AM – 12:00 PM**

Dr. Kylie Courtwright joined the Inova Health System in September 2024 as a Sports Medicine Neuropsychology Fellow. Dr. Courtwright obtained her doctoral degree in clinical psychology with a neuropsychology focus from Pacific University after completing a predoctoral internship at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks in Northwest Arkansas. Prior to graduate school, Dr. Courtwright obtained her Bachelor of Science in Forensic Psychology from Walden University. She was also enlisted in the United States Navy for six years. She has presented posters at national conferences and has published in peer-reviewed journals with a primary focus on general neuropsychology. She is currently engaging in research more specialized in sport-related concussion.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## DR. JENNIFER LUND



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Dr. Jennifer Lund currently serves as the System Medical Director for Inova Occupational Health and Inova Team Member Health. Dr. Lund received her medical degree from the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine and her Master's in Public Health from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. She completed her internship in Internal Medicine at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and her Occupational Medicine residency training at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Lund also served in the United States Navy for eight years as a Flight Surgeon. Prior to joining Inova Occupational Health, Dr. Lund worked at the Police and Fire Clinic in Washington DC. Through her work in the first responder community, she recognized the need to do more for the first responders in Northern Virginia and developed new partnership and programs focusing on cancer screening, mental health, and concussions among various other health and wellbeing initiatives. Dr. Lund initiated a partnership with Inova's Cancer Screening and Prevention Center, Saville, to establish a comprehensive cancer screening program for firefighters, which led to Inova's Firefighter Cancer Screening Study. Additionally, in collaboration with regional mental health experts, she developed a wellness check-in program for firefighters aimed at early detection of mental health symptoms and providing educational materials and/or pathways to care. Currently, she is collaborating with a local jurisdiction and the George Mason University research team to quantify the physical demands of the firefighting through objective testing measures. She also worked in conjunction with Inova Sports Medicine to launch a concussion screening program for firefighters as part of their annual NFPA exam which also has application to law enforcement as a whole. Dr. Lund remains active with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health Occupational and Environmental Medicine Residency program through mentorship and education. She is also an active member with the Metro-Washington American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), the Mid-Atlantic ACOEM, and Science to the Station Occupational Health Working Group. She co-led Inova's Cancer Prevention Seminar in 2023 and presented at the Metro-Washington Council of Governments meetings in 2023, 2024, and 2025. At the core of new programming, research and collaborative efforts is Dr. Lund's avid support for a comprehensive approach to firefighter health and safety. She strives to incorporate innovative, evidence-based tools into the offerings available in the Inova Occupational Health program to further this aim.

# **2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER**

## **ALANA YANAGIDA**



### **Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac** **11:15 AM – 12:00 PM**

Alana Yanagida, LCSW, is a Behavioral Health Therapist at the Inova Saville Cancer Screening and Prevention Center, where she joined the team in April 2025. With over a decade of experience in behavioral health, she helps individuals navigate cancer risk, screening, and prevention, focusing on empowerment, resilience, and whole-person wellness.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## EJAZ PARACHA



### **Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac** **11:15 AM – 12:00 PM**

Ejaz is a Clinical Research Coordinator II with several years of experience in the clinical setting. He began working in the clinic in 2021 and transitioned into a coordinator role in 2023. He supports the coordination and execution of clinical research studies, ensuring accuracy, regulatory compliance, and high-quality patient care. He is dedicated to advancing clinical research through careful study coordination, participant support, and strict adherence to study protocols and regulatory standards.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## ENZO OCHOA



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Enzo Ochoa serves as the Senior Director of Occupational Health at Inova. Enzo has operational oversight over the Occupational Health Centers in Alexandria, Ashburn and Prince William County. Additionally, he oversees our corporate health clinics and other federal contracts. He joined Inova Health System in 2009, in the Human Resources department before transferring to the urgent care centers in 2013 serving as a Director. Enzo has worked with Inova's Occupational Health program exclusively since 2017. During his time with the program, Enzo has worked intimately with several jurisdictions serving Arlington, Loudoun Montgomery and Prince William Counties as well as the City of Alexandria, MWAA and the US Capitol Police launching programming that aims to improve the health and well-being of our community partners. Enzo has a passion for paving the way for innovation solutions, new programming and meaningful partnerships with our public safety community. Spending most of his life in the DMV, he believes by taking care of those who take care of us will strengthen our local communities and he is proud to work with the occupational health's medical leadership to continue this effort. Enzo has a BBA in Organizational Behavior and Human Resource Management from the University of North Texas.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## BRYAN BASSIG



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Bryan Bassig, PhD, MPH is an epidemiologist with specialized training in cancer and molecular epidemiology, data analytics, and environmental health science. He is currently the Director of the Cancer Prevention Research Program at the Saville Cancer Screening and Prevention Center within the Inova Schar Cancer Institute, collaborating closely with Principal Investigators and clinical researchers in the center to design and implement studies focused on cancer prevention and early detection. He has a particular interest in evaluating innovative and emerging tools and methods for cancer screening in populations with high-risk occupational and environmental exposures as well as health disparities research. Prior to joining Inova, Dr. Bassig worked as a research epidemiologist for over a decade in the federal government at the National Center for Health Statistics and the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics, National Cancer Institute, where he led or co-authored >120 publications with international collaborators focused on the etiology of lung cancer in never-smokers and lymphohematopoietic malignancies, the early biologic effects of occupational exposures, and genetic susceptibility to cancer. Dr. Bassig earned a PhD in Cancer Epidemiology and Environmental Health Science and a MPH in Chronic Disease Epidemiology from Yale University.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## STEPH HERBERT, NBC-HWC, CWP



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM

Steph Herbert is the Senior Director at Inova Well, where she leads the design and implementation of hospital-based, community, and corporate wellbeing programs across the health system. With more than eight years of experience in wellbeing strategy and delivery, her work focuses on advancing sustainable, whole-person health for individuals, teams, and organizations.

Steph brings a strong foundation in healthcare operations, shaped by 17 years of progressive experience across clinical and leadership roles. Earlier in her career, she advanced through frontline and operational leadership positions, gaining deep insight into how healthcare systems function and how wellbeing initiatives can be thoughtfully integrated to support both patient and workforce outcomes. This background now informs her systems-level approach to wellness, culture change, and human sustainability. She is a National Board-Certified Health and Wellness Coach (NBC-HWC), a Certified Organizational Wellness Practitioner (CWP) through WELCOA, and a Certified HeartMath® Trainer. Steph is also a Certified Mental Health First Aider and holds an End-of-Life Doula Certification from the University of Vermont. Her work is grounded in compassion, evidence-based practice, and a commitment to honoring the human experience across the lifespan.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## ANTHONY KELLEHER



### Track 1: Operational Safety // Tactical Decision Making 1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Anthony Kelleher is the Assistant Fire Chief of Operations for the DC Fire and EMS Department. He has been with the department for over 25 years, starting his career in 1992. Kelleher has held various leadership roles, including Chief Fire Officer and Fire Chief, and has been recognized for his contributions to the fire service community. He is also a Senior Instructor with Traditions Training, LLC, and has been involved in various training programs and events to enhance firefighting and emergency medical services. Kelleher is known for his advocacy for firefighters and his commitment to improving the skills and efficiency of the fire service.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## KRISTINA MOORE



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Kristina Moore, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Virginia specializing in behavioral health support for first responders. She has over 18 years of local government experience, including 10 years as a 911 public safety dispatcher, and holds a master's degree in advanced clinical social work. Her background also includes emergency crisis response, where she worked closely with fire, rescue, and law enforcement personnel. Kristina is an adjunct professor at George Mason University in the College of Public Health and currently serves as the Senior Behavioral Health Coordinator for Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System, overseeing wellness and behavioral health programming for approximately 2,000 members. Her connection to public safety is both professional and deeply personal, with multiple family members having served in the field. These experiences, paired with her clinical training, give her a holistic understanding of the unique pressures faced by first responders and their families and inform her compassionate, judgment-free, and stigma-reducing approach to care.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## STEVE WEISSMAN



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 1:15 PM – 2:00 PM

Steve Weissman is a 46-year veteran of the fire service. He entered the fire service in 1974 with the Merrick (NY) Volunteer Fire Department. His career continued with the Fairfax County (VA) Fire and Rescue Department retiring as a Captain. Steve went on to serve in the Hanover County Fire-EMS Department as a Battalion Chief and finished his career serving as Deputy Chief with the Stafford County Fire and Rescue Department in Stafford, Virginia. Steve was one of the first shift safety officers for Fairfax County FRD and a member of Virginia Task Force 1-International Urban Search and Rescue Team. He was an adjunct instructor for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs and the National Fire Academy. In 2016 Steve was diagnosed with occupational cancer. He joined the FCSN shortly after his diagnosis and serves as the Virginia State Director and as the FCSN Regional Director for the Eastern Region of the United States. In 2023 Steve received the Virginia Governors Award for Excellence in the Fire Service for his dedication in assisting firefighters battling cancer and his work in establishing a relationship with the Virginia Commonwealth University's Massey Cancer Center to develop research and the understanding of the dangers Virginia firefighters specifically face related to their cancer risks.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## DR. DANIEL MADRZYKOWSKI



### Track 1: Operational Safety / Tactical Decision Making 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Daniel Madrzykowski is the Senior Director of Research for the Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI), part of the UL Research Institutes. Dan has more than 40 years of experience working to improve fire safety by conducting research in areas of: fire dynamics, fire suppression, and fire investigation. He has a PhD in fire engineering from the University of Canterbury, a MS in fire protection engineering and a BS in mechanical engineering from the University of Maryland. He is a member of the International Society of Fire Service Instructors and was a developer of the Understanding and Fighting Basement Fires course.

For more than 30 years, Dan has been conducting research with the US Fire Administration and collaborating with the National Fire Academy in the development of courses. In addition, Dan has assisted with the development of course materials for the International Association of Fire Fighters, International Association of Fire Chiefs, International Association of Arson Investigators, and the National Fire Protection Association. Dan is also Fellow in the Society of Fire Protection Engineers. As a result of Dan's firefighting research and his expertise in sharing that knowledge, he has been honored with many awards including: the rank of Honorary Battalion Chief with the FDNY, the IAFC President's Award, the IFSTA Granito Award, the ISFSI Instructor of the Year, and the Citizen Services, Samuel J. Heyman Service to America Medal. In 2023, Dan received the Mason Lankford Fire Service Leadership Award from the Congressional Fire Services Institute and the Everett E. Hudiburg Award from IFSTA.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## VICKIE TAYLOR



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Vickie H. Taylor, LCSW, is the Director of the Prince William County Public Safety Resilience Center, a wellness promotion and counseling unit created in 2016 and funded by Prince William County government to serve law enforcement officers, corrections, firefighters, paramedics and 9-1-1 telecommunicators and their immediate family members. Prior to assuming this position, Ms. Taylor worked in community behavioral health for 36 years at Prince William County Community Services. As part of her work at Community Services, in 1985, she began providing behavioral health consultation/support to the public safety agencies in Prince William County, VA. She has provided support to public safety personnel and their families following line of duty deaths and numerous major disaster events, including assisting the FDNY following the 9-11 terrorist attack. She also works on a contract basis with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation as a trainer, behavioral health consultant, and the coordinator of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Weekend Family Day. She is a contributing author and trainer of Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Medical Personnel and Stress First Aid for Law Enforcement Personnel.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## BETH FLAHERTY



### **Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness** **2:15 PM – 3:00 PM**

Beth Flaherty is a licensed clinical marriage and family therapist in Virginia and Maryland. She is the clinical director of the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters Peer Support Team as well as Prince George's County (MD) Professional Fire Fighters and Paramedics, Local 1619 Peer Support Team. Ms. Flaherty regularly contributes to Firefighter Nation Magazine on mental wellness issues and has a Private Practice in Maryland where she specializes in counseling First Responder couples and families.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## RONIT REGUER



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Ronit Reguer is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in both DC and New York and currently holds the role of the DC Fire & EMS Department's first Behavioral Health Coordinator. She spearheads initiatives geared towards enhancing the overall wellness of all Department personnel. Her career commenced in 2006 at the Victim Services Unit of the Brooklyn DA's Office, where she offered crisis intervention, advocacy, and counseling to victims of interpersonal violence. Ronit's journey continued with positions as a Family Advocacy Specialist at the US Coast Guard, a Survivor Advocate at Columbia University's Sexual Violence Response, and a Sexual Assault Response Coordinator at the US Navy. In 2013, Ronit established a private practice specializing in trauma treatment, including EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization & Reprocessing). From 2019 through 2021, she contributed her expertise to the FBI's Security Division, where she played a pivotal role in revamping the mental health component of their background investigation and streamlining associated processes. Ronit left Security Division to move back to her passion as a Victim Assistance Program Specialist in their Victim Services Division, overseeing Victim Specialists in a primarily Native American region. During her tenure, Ronit actively developed programs and procedures to enhance victim services both within the organization and the national community. Throughout her two-decade career, Ronit has consistently advocated for the emotional well-being of her colleagues who regularly confront trauma, seeking to establish an optimal work-life balance. Her arrival in September 2023 marked a significant step forward in the Department's commitment to the holistic health and safety of the dedicated DC Fire and EMS members.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## LESLIE GEER



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Leslie is a licensed clinical social worker with a wealth of experience in high-stress work environments. She is currently serving as the Public Safety Wellness Coordinator for Arlington County. With 22 years of experience as a clinician, administrator, leader, and organizational consultant focused on addressing burnout and retention, Leslie has developed a deep commitment to enhancing the well-being of public service employees. She holds a Master of Social Work degree from Boston College and a Master of Public Administration degree from the University of Colorado. Having grown up in a military family, Leslie considers Colorado her home but is thrilled to be in Arlington County. Outside of her professional life, she enjoys traveling, spending time outdoors, hosting spontaneous 80's dance parties in her kitchen, and enjoying quality time with family, friends, and her beloved dog, Wilma.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## VERA ST. HILL



### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Vera St. Hill, LCSW, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the Fairfax County Public Safety Health and Wellness Director, bringing nearly 20 years of experience supporting mental health and strengthening pathways to care across public safety agencies. She holds a master's degree in social work from Norfolk State University and has extensive experience working with fire and rescue, law enforcement, and other high stress public safety environments. Ms. St. Hill spent 14 years with the Community Services Board and has provided clinical services within the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center, working directly with justice involved individuals. Her background also includes supporting specialty court dockets such as the Hampton and Newport News Drug Court and the Hampton Veterans Treatment Docket, where she offered trauma informed care to individuals with military and public safety backgrounds. A strong advocate for reducing behavioral health stigma within public safety, she leads wellness initiatives and systemwide strategies that promote resilience and early intervention. Her empathetic, practical approach continues to strengthen mental health awareness and support throughout Fairfax County's public safety community.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## NATALIE BOWERS

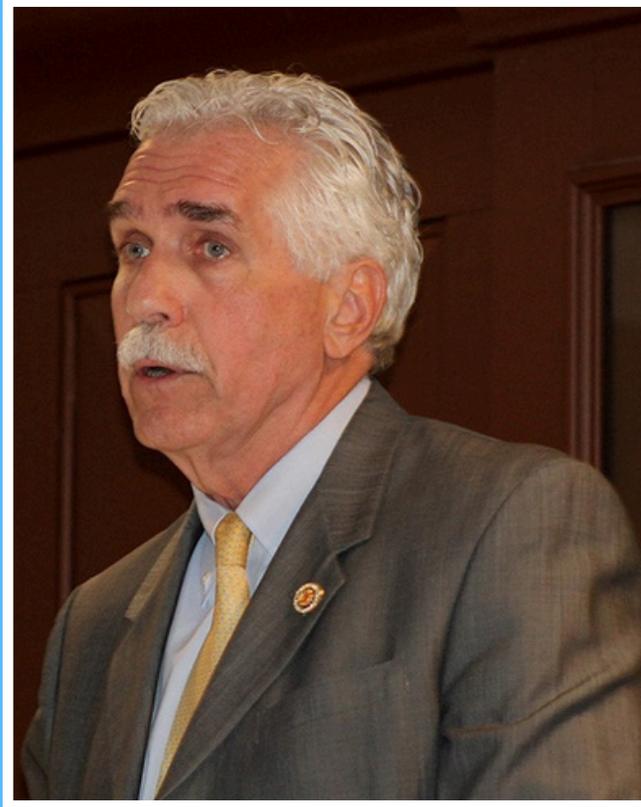


### Track 2: Behavioral Health & Firefighter Wellness 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Natalie Bowers, LCSW-C, is a Maryland-licensed Clinical Social Worker and the current Public Safety Behavioral Health Supervisor for Frederick County, MD. In this position, Natalie manages a team of clinicians who provide education, support, and clinical services to the county's public safety personnel. Natalie's 15 years of experience in the behavioral health field, and graduate training in both social work and psychology, serve as the foundation for her expertise in trauma-informed care, crisis intervention, and resiliency within the first responder community. Throughout her career, Natalie has worked across a diverse range of clinical settings—including emergency departments and community mental health centers—treating children, adults, and families. She has worked extensively with public safety personnel across these settings and has a true passion for helping this community. In addition to her clinical work, Natalie has also served as a college professor for many years, teaching psychology, social work, and research methodology. This background allows her to bridge the gap between research and practical, culturally informed clinical applications. Natalie's dedication to first responders is both professional and personal. Coming from a family of fire department, law enforcement, and military service members, she possesses a unique, lived understanding of the specific challenges and sacrifices inherent in public safety service.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## PATRICK MORRISON



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Patrick Morrison recently retired from the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF). The IAFF is a labor union representing over 353,000 professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel in the United States and Canada. In this role as Chief of Field Services, he oversaw member-facing divisions of the organization, including the Division of Health, Safety and Medicine, the Division of Technical Assistance and Information Resources, and the Division of Training, Education, and Grants. Prior to serving in that role, Mr. Morrison served as Assistant to the General President for Health, Safety and Medicine. The Division of Health, Safety and Medicine provides IAFF affiliates with a comprehensive array of services addressing the occupational health and safety of fire fighters and EMS personnel. He was responsible for the daily operations of the Division as well as the development and implementation of fire service occupational health and safety standards, including crucial health and safety issues published by National Fire Protection Association, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and IAFF Wellness Fitness Labor/Management Task Force. Mr. Morrison's expertise is in the design and implementation of behavioral health, safety, and wellness programs to improve fire fighters' overall physical and mental health, address their medical needs, and increase protections from the hazardous elements of firefighting. Prior to joining the IAFF, Mr. Morrison was a career fire fighter for 21 years with the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department and the Professional Firefighters and Paramedics, IAFF Local 2068. He also had two brothers on the Department and currently has three nephews serving with the Fairfax County Fire Department.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## DAVID HOAGLAND



### **Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac** **2:15 PM – 3:00 PM**

David Hoagland is a District of Columbia resident of Ward 5 and a 18 year veteran of the DC Fire & EMS Department where he holds the rank of Captain. He has been active in the DC Labor movement for most of his career. He currently serves as the President of the District of Columbia Firefighters Association, IAFF Local 36, AFL-CIO. Local 36 represents the majority of the 2000 plus employees of the Fire and EMS Department.

He serves as an IAFF Representative on the NFPA 1750 Technical Committee- Fire and Emergency Service Organization and Deployment-Career (FAC-AAA). He lobbies for policy changing with stakeholders in the DC Government and across the MWCOC region. David graduated from The George Washington University in 2011 with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Emergency Health Services.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## SEAN DECRANE



### Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac 2:15 PM – 3:00 PM

Sean DeCrane retired as a 25+ year veteran of the Cleveland Division of Fire. He served in various roles including the Director of Training and Chief of Operations retiring as a Battalion Chief. Sean was appointed by General President Kelly as Assistant to the General President of the IAFF Health and Safety Division and manages the IAFF participation in Industry Standards and Building Codes development processes, Fireground Survival Training, Fit 2 Thrive and Behavioral Health programs. Sean recently served as a Research Engineer Associate for UL Solutions focused on developing strategic planning, project prioritization and implementation for the UL Fire Research and Development Team while assigned to the Principal Engineers Team for the UL's Built Environment COU. He was responsible for engaging with various industry organizations with a focus on the international fire service including Asia, Australia, Europe, and the United Kingdom. Sean has been involved in research at Underwriters Laboratories and the National Institute of Standards and Technology for a strong focus on fire fighter tactical operations and the fire fighter work environment. He served on the UL Fire Council and is a member of the UL Fire Safety Research Institute's Advisory Board. In 2021, Sean was named to the UL William Henry Merrill Society as a Distinguished Member of Technical Staff.

# 2026 NCR FIRE HEALTH & SAFETY SYMPOSIUM SPEAKER

## JOHN DONNELLY



### AFTERNOON KEYNOTE

**3:15 PM – 4:15 PM**

Fire and EMS Chief John A. Donnelly, Sr. was nominated by Mayor Muriel Bowser on September 4, 2020, to serve as the next Fire and Emergency Medical Services Chief and to lead the 2,100 member DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department. He was confirmed by the Council of the District of Columbia on December 15, 2020. Fire and EMS Chief John A. Donnelly, Sr. started his career with DC Fire and EMS in 1992 at Truck 16. Over the course of his career, he has served at Rescue Squad 3, Tower 3, Battalion Fire Chief 2; as the Division Commander of Special Operations, Homeland Security, and Apparatus Division; and as a member of the Command Staff in Special Projects and Executive Officer Roles. In 2018, Chief Donnelly was promoted to the newly established Professional Development Bureau which includes the Human Resources Division which includes the Payroll and Compliance Offices, Professional Standards Division, Training Division, the Medical Services Division, and the Grants Office. Chief Donnelly serves on numerous committees supporting regional and national preparedness, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs Terrorism and Homeland Security Committee and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's Fire Chief's Committee. Chief Donnelly is a long-time Ward 4 resident of the District of Columbia and lives in Manor Park. He spends his free time working with the Boy Scouts of Troop 98 in Brookland.

# Symposium Itinerary

	Track 1: Operational Safety/ Tactical Decision Making	Track 2: Behavioral Health/ Firefighter Wellness	Track 3: Cancer & Cardiac
0630 - 0800	Coffee/ Light Breakfast / Vendor Setup		
0800 - 0900	Opening Keynote Speaker: Dena Ali		
0915 - 1000	John Tippet	Sidney Hinds	John Oates
1015 - 1100	Daniel Shaw	Kenny Mitchell	Megan Lautz
1115 - 1200	Joshua Burchick	Kylie Courtwright	Dr. Jennifer Lund, Enzo Ochoa, Alana Yanagida, Ejaz Paracha, Bryan Bassig, Steph Herbert
1200 - 1315	Lunch & Vendor Time		
1315 - 1400	Anthony Kelleher	Kristina Moore	Steve Weissman
1415 - 1500	Dr. Dan Madrzkowski	Kristina Moore, Vickie Taylor, Beth Flaherty, Ronit Reguer, Leslie Geer, Vera St. Hill, Natalie Bowers	Patrick Morrison, David Hoagland, Sean Decrane
1515 - 1615	Closing Keynote Speaker: John Donnelly		
1630 - 1800	Social Reception & Vendor Time		

\*Note that there will be 15-minute breaks between each speaker to switch rooms and more vendor time\*