

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

2/25/2025

Bill: 3rd Substitute HB 65 – Firefighter Cancer Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Casey Snider

Floor Sponsor: Senator Michael K. McKell

UASD Position: Support

This Bill modifies the Utah Occupational Disease Act by expanding the rebuttable presumption for a firefighter diagnosed with cancer.

Discussion: The Bill expands the list of cancers that are presumptively considered to arise from service as a firefighter and establishes specific requirements for the rebuttable presumption. It excludes respiratory cancers linked to the use of cigarettes, electronic cigarettes, tobacco products, or marijuana from this presumption. Additionally, the Bill provides cancer screenings for firefighters and requires fire departments to cover the out-of-pocket costs associated with these screenings. It also includes provisions for the management of the cancer screening program.

Representative Snider presented the Bill alongside Jack Tidrow, representing the Professional Firefighters of Utah. They discussed the third substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The substitute allocates \$3.7 million from the General Fund and stipulates that presumptive cancer is considered to have been contracted in the course of employment “as a firefighter if the firefighter demonstrates exposure to a known carcinogen, as defined by the International Agency for Research on Cancer, while serving as a firefighter”. It also removes the pre-screening protocol and increases the required years of service from five to eight. In a previous Legislative Session, the Legislature passed a Bill mandating an examination of cancers that should be added to the presumptive cancer list for firefighters. Following research conducted with the Rocky Mountain Health Center, the sponsor has determined that additional cancers need to be included and has done so in this Bill. The sponsor also aims to establish a cancer screening center similar to an advanced facility in Arizona.

Mr. Tidrow noted that 60% of firefighter deaths result from occupationally caused cancer. The President of the Utah State Fire Chiefs Association expressed support for the Bill. Many firefighters also spoke in favor, stating that had the Bill been in place a year earlier, they would not have had to endure such extreme measures to treat their current cancers. A member of the State Fire Chiefs Board also voiced support for the Bill.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 0

N/V: 4

Outcome: 3rd Substitute HB 65 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 2nd Substitute HB 199 – Substance Use Treatment and Enforcement Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Tyler Clancy
Floor Sponsor: Senator Brady Brammer
UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill addresses treatment and enforcement issues related to substance use.

Discussion: The Bill requires local substance abuse authorities to include a list of available substance use service providers in their annual plans, ensuring the information is formatted for accessibility by first responders. Likewise, local mental health authorities must include a list of available mental health service providers in their annual plans, also in a format usable by first responders. The Bill encourages first responders to refer individuals experiencing intentional or accidental overdoses to substance use or mental health services.

The legislation establishes requirements for syringe exchange programs and related data collection while prohibiting supervised drug injection sites. It also authorizes opioid treatment programs to operate mobile units that provide medication for substance use withdrawal symptoms or opioid use disorders, with a particular focus on supporting homeless and rural communities. The Department of Health and Human Services is granted rulemaking authority to regulate these mobile units.

Furthermore, the Bill amends criminal provisions of the Utah Controlled Substances Act, introduces the crime of maintaining a drug-involved premises, and updates Utah's nuisance laws, particularly concerning nuisances caused by illegal drug activity.

Representative Clancy emphasized that the Bill builds upon existing best practices and formalizes a mission statement within the harm reduction code to guide addiction recovery efforts. Senator Plumb expressed support for the Bill.

The legislation received endorsements from the Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice ("CCJJ"), the Utah Harm Reduction Coalition, and the Public Policy Think Tank from Austin, Texas.

Yeas: 4
Nays: 0
N/V: 3

Outcome: 2nd Substitute HB 199 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.
