



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

## NEWS from Fire Fighters

1750 NEW YORK AVE NW WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006 • WWW.IAFF.ORG

For Immediate Release  
May 18, 2009

# The International Association of Fire Fighters Sounds the Alarm on High Blood Pressure through National Initiative

*Washington, DC*– The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) today announces a first-of-its-kind health initiative that is providing its 300,000 professional fire fighters with tools to raise awareness of high blood pressure within their ranks and in the local communities that they serve. These fire fighters – who are responsible for protecting 85 percent of the nation’s population – will help fight this chronic condition through health screenings and other educational activities.

The campaign, launched as the Stop, Drop, Control High Blood Pressure Program around May 17, World Hypertension Day, is being conducted in collaboration with Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. As part of the initiative, a public online resource [www.stopdropcontrol.com](http://www.stopdropcontrol.com) has been developed.

Approximately 74 million adults in the United States have high blood pressure, but about 30 percent of them are unaware they have the condition. High blood pressure is an asymptomatic, chronic condition that can cause damage to the blood vessels and make the heart work harder. Uncontrolled high blood pressure is a leading risk factor for cardiovascular disease and is associated with a higher risk of heart attack, heart failure and stroke.

Fire fighters, who face extreme physical and psychological stresses in their work protecting their communities, have a high rate of on-duty deaths caused by heart disease (45 percent) – and high blood pressure may be one of the contributing factors. This first-hand experience makes IAFF and its members pivotal to the campaign and gives them a keen understanding of why raising awareness of high blood pressure is so important.

“Professional fire fighters are among the most trusted and respected leaders of their communities, and know first-hand the dangers of high blood pressure,” said Harold Schaitberger, IAFF General President. “The IAFF is pleased to be working with Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation – a global leader in hypertension research – on an important public health initiative that will arm us with resources - such as a comprehensive toolkit - to raise awareness about the potential dangers of high blood pressure among fire fighters and the general public.”

DIO-901596

IAFF affiliates and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation will also be participating in community health fairs in 20 cities that will provide the opportunity for fire fighters to speak about the program and other health and safety issues.

As a follow-on component to the Stop, Drop, Control program, and as part of its commitment to outcomes research, the IAFF and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation will be conducting outcome studies to evaluate the effects of the program on the health of fire fighters. Results of these studies may serve as a tool to help guide hypertension management practices among fire fighters across the country. The first two cities to participate in the studies will be Indianapolis and Phoenix.

“We anticipate that these studies may lead to improved outcomes and enhance firefighters’ understanding of how to manage high blood pressure in this unique group of patients, whose welfare is important to everyone,” said Joanne, R. Chang, MD PhD, VP & Head Evidenced Based Medicine, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation. “This study reflects our commitment to improving the management of high blood pressure.”

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The International Association of Fire Fighters, headquartered in Washington, DC, represents more than 295,000 full-time professional fire fighters and paramedics in the United States and Canada. The IAFF is the leading advocate in North America for the safety and training of fire fighters and paramedics. More information is available at [www.iaff.org](http://www.iaff.org).

Located in East Hanover, New Jersey, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation is an affiliate of Novartis AG, which provides healthcare solutions that address the evolving needs of patients and societies. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation is focused on improving the lives of the hundreds of millions of people with diseases and conditions of the cardiovascular system, including hypertension. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation has an extensive clinical research program in hypertension involving more than 100,000 patients. Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation is dedicated to helping physicians and patients address cardiovascular health through effective medicines and an ongoing commitment to education, support and research.

For more information on Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation, please visit <http://www.pharma.us.novartis.com>.

The IAFF and Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation maintain a strong collaborative relationship built upon the collective goal of serving the health and safety needs of fire fighters and the general public. The primary aim of the Stop, Drop, Control collaboration is to raise awareness of the importance of blood pressure management within these populations. In their roles, the IAFF is making educational materials available to their membership, are hosting blood pressure screening events within their communities, and are participating in community health fairs in an effort to raise awareness of the importance managing high blood pressure. In collaboration with the IAFF, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation has produced the educational content for distribution to IAFF members, is financially supporting blood pressure screenings in 20 cities across the country and are providing support for public health awareness activities surrounding the program.

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