

Stefanos N. Kales MD, MPH, FACP, FACOEM



Dr. Kales is a Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, and Professor & Director of the Occupational Medicine Residency at the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH). He is also the Chief of Occupational & Environmental Medicine and Medical Director for Employee Health & Industrial Medicine at Cambridge Health Alliance, a Harvard Teaching Hospital.

The CHA Occupational Health Program has over 850 client companies, including various fire and police departments, a FEMA team and WTC responders.

Dr. Kales has participated in a wide range of research, advisory and teaching activities on five continents resulting in over 235 scientific publications (75 related to firefighters/first responders) and wide recognition nationally and internationally. He serves on the editorial boards of several biomedical journals and participates in Harvard's Cardiovascular Epidemiology Program, and Division of Sleep Medicine.

His primary research involves the health of public safety personnel, and he is the leading international clinical authority regarding cardiovascular disease among these professionals. His public safety research has received Massachusetts, US Federal and Canadian funding.

Dr. Kales' work has been most influential in determining the causal relationship of heart disease among firefighters and law enforcement officers related to their job activities and other factors. His group has provided seminal contributions in the clinical epidemiology of cardiovascular events in firefighters; including the first definitive statistical association of strenuous job tasks and on-duty cardiovascular deaths, which was subsequently confirmed in a later New England Journal of Medicine publication. An analogous paper examining sudden cardiac death in US police in the British Medical Journal has now established similar strong associations with strenuous law enforcement duties.

His team's initiatives have also included an ambitious Mediterranean Diet Intervention trial among Midwestern firefighters which is funded by a \$1.5 million grant from the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (awarded the 2017 Silver Medal for Health Research by the Oleocanthol International Society); another DHS-funded case-control study

firefighter cancer in Indiana, recent lifestyle interventions with various fire academies, and another \$1.1 million US DHS grant to create and validate a Healthy Lifestyle smartphone application for new firefighters.

Dr. Kales has also influenced international thinking among occupational physicians regarding firefighter/police officer fitness for duty, the need for improved wellness programs, better control of risk factors, and whether firefighters/police can safely return to work in the presence of significant coronary and/or structural heart disease.

He has collaborated closely with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF, Expert speaker panel for Redmond, Bolton and other conferences), the National Fallen Firefighters' Foundation, the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) and the National Volunteer Fire Council, as well as having been an invited speaker several times by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. He has also worked with the Firefighter Cancer Support Network and the First Responder Center of Excellence.

For his significant contributions, Dr. Kales was selected as the 2013 winner of the Kehoe Award for Excellence in Education and Research as well the 2024 Mentorship Award both from the American College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, and the 2014 Harriet Hardy award from the New England College of Occupational & Environmental Medicine, all lifetime achievement awards for outstanding contributions to the field. He has also been recognized with service awards for his research and dedication to firefighter health and fitness by the International Association of Fire Chiefs and with induction as an Officer into the Order of Emperor Dom Pedro II by the Corps of Military Firefighters of Brazil's Federal District.

In 2024, he was invited as a distinguished occupational medicine physician and fire/police health expert to be a Plenary Speaker and Task Force Member by the American College of Cardiology & American Heart Association's Inaugural Task Force on Cardiovascular Care of the Tactical Athlete in Washington, DC.