OLR Bill Analysis
HB 6384

AN ACT CONCERNING THE PAYMENT OF INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLES AND LABORATORY AND DIAGNOSTIC TESTING FEES FROM THE FIREFIGHTERS CANCER RELIEF PROGRAM.

SUMMARY

This bill expands the permitted uses of the firefighters cancer relief program’s funds to include reimbursing eligible paid and volunteer firefighters for their cancer-related health insurance deductibles and laboratory and diagnostic testing fees (see BACKGROUND). Currently, the program’s funds may be used only to (1) provide wage replacement benefits and (2) cover its administrative expenses.

Under the bill, the process for being reimbursed for deductibles and fees is the same as under existing law for receiving wage replacement benefits. The law’s process, as the bill applies to reimbursements, is generally as follows:

1. the firefighters cancer relief subcommittee of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association reviews and approves eligible claims;

2. the State Treasurer remits reimbursements from the program’s account within 30 days after the subcommittee approves them, provided there are funds available in the account; and

3. firefighters approved for reimbursement are eligible for reimbursement for a period determined by the subcommittee, but not to exceed 24 months.

Additionally, as is the case with wage replacement benefits, the bill prohibits using an approval of reimbursing deductibles or fees as evidence, proof, or an acknowledgement of liability under the state’s workers compensation law.
The bill also makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2019

BACKGROUND

Eligible Participants

By law, firefighters eligible for funds under the firefighters cancer relief program include any (1) uniformed member of a paid municipal, state, or volunteer fire department and (2) local fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, fire investigator, fire inspector, and certain other classes of inspectors and investigators (CGS § 7-313g).

The program’s funding is available for a firefighter suffering from cancer affecting the brain, skin, or the skeletal, digestive, endocrine, respiratory, lymphatic, reproductive, urinary, or hematological system that results in death, or temporary or permanent total or partial disability if the firefighter meets a series of conditions. Some of the conditions include not using cigarettes or other tobacco products within 15 years of applying for funding and submitting to annual physical examinations, including blood testing, during his or her active service and for a period of five years after the date he or she last served as a firefighter (CGS § 7-313j).

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 24  Nay 0  (03/19/2019)