

## Response to Questions on the FY 2010 County's Line of Business & Schools Program Review Processes Fall 2008

**Request By:** Chairman Connolly

**Question:** How much of the \$5.8 million in identified costs for Safety and Personnel Services for the Fire and Rescue Department (FRD) is related to wellness? Are there things FRD does well in terms of wellness that the rest of the County could possibly be doing?

**Response:** The Personnel Services Bureau budget equals \$5.8 million and includes eight core areas with inter-related programs which collectively relate to the overall health and wellness goals for the department's personnel. Costs directly related to wellness fall under the Health Programs Section which includes the Public Safety Occupational Health Center (PSOHC) and equates to \$3.3 million annually.

The Health Programs Section is comprised of the Public Safety Occupational Health Center, Behavioral Health, Wellness/Fitness, and the Infectious Disease Control and Prevention Branches.

The Public Safety Occupational Health Center (PSOHC) is a medical facility that provides occupational health screening for public safety applicants, incumbent fire and rescue personnel, volunteers, sheriff and police. The PSOHC costs approximately \$2.7 million annually to operate and provides comprehensive medical-physicals, immunizations, respirator fit-testing, medical consultations, surveillance, fitness-for-duty determinations, physical therapy, illness prevention, health risk reduction, and urgent care for industrial injuries/illnesses to career and volunteer public safety personnel.

The Behavioral Health branch provides assistance to fire and rescue personnel in effectively coping with critical incident stress, emotional, physical, and the mental stresses of work and personal issues through active support of and participation in the countywide Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Additionally, the Behavioral Health branch aids with assisting family members when fire and rescue personnel sustain a serious injury or illness, along with overseeing the Chaplains' Program.

The Wellness/Fitness branch emphasizes physical fitness by supporting personnel with equipment, physical fitness training, mentorship, and a nutrition program provided by certified Peer Fitness Trainers. Additionally, the Peer Fitness branch manages the annual Work Performance Evaluation for incumbent personnel and the Candidate Physical Ability Test (CPAT) for fire applicants. This branch also works directly with the Human Resource Division in the hiring and recruitment process to ensure a balanced and healthy workforce is maintained.

The Infectious Disease Control and Prevention (ICP) branch conducts all education, prevention and reporting related to infectious disease exposure events. While the ICP branch works closely with the Public Safety Occupational Health Center, the ICP branch works collectively with other county agencies assisting with education, prevention, and

post-exposure management related to emerging infectious diseases such as Weapons of Mass Destruction, hepatitis C, etc.

During the development of the County's new health promotion and wellness initiative, LiveWell, many activities of the Fire and Rescue Department were examined to determine if they could be expanded to the overall County population. FRD's Health Programs Section focuses on preventive programs, education of its employees, and overall physical fitness. The County's LiveWell program mirrors those same objectives. The program currently includes fitness classes at the Employee Fitness Center, lunchtime educational seminars, an expanded flu shot program, health risk assessments, and subsidized memberships at County RECenters. An on-site County health clinic, similar to the PSOHC, was also considered to emphasize preventive care. However, the implementation of such a clinic was cost-prohibitive given the current fiscal environment and was recommended as a longer-term initiative. It should also be noted that the County's Health Promotion and Privacy Coordinator is in the process of convening a Health Promotion and Wellness Council. The Coordinator and the Council will promote LiveWell programs to participants, examine best practices and stay abreast of health issues affecting employees and retirees, coordinate and utilize existing resources, and continue to develop the program to meet the needs of current and retired County employees.