



**Survivor Story: Adrian Manning**  
**Newport News, Virginia Fire Department**  
**Diagnosed with Stage 3 Rectal Adenocarcinoma**

"Pay close attention to your body and get tested if something does not feel right."



As firefighters, we are at a higher risk for exposures to certain cancers. Cancer does not care if you're a career or volunteer firefighter, or what size your department is. Cancer does not discriminate. I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Rectal Adenocarcinoma caused by exposure to asbestos. I was only 41 years old and "increased bowel activity" was my only symptom! I had to request to be tested after my department's Safety Officer had released some information during a safety stand down. Luckily, my primary care physician understood risks and reviewed the safety stand down information, and at that point, agreed to test me earlier than the recommended age. That saved my life!

A co-worker of mine was a mentor for Firefighter Cancer Support Network, and when I was diagnosed, he reached out to me. Within a week I had a toolbox and a mentor walking me through all that was coming at me. The best thing to happen to me during my battle with cancer was being supported by FCSN. I am still here with life-long lingering side effects from my treatment, but being alive even with the side effects, is better than being dead. HAD I WAITED FOR THE RECOMMENDED TESTING AGE; I WOULD BE DEAD!

My diagnosis and treatment affected my career, my emotions, and my relationships with my family. DO NOT go through this alone! You need a strong support network behind you. My journey has taken me through

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radiation, multiple surgeries, multiple rounds of chemotherapy, and many visits to a court room. It is all consuming. I had to medically retire in December of 2020 due to my cancer. I'm looking forward to becoming a mentor for firefighter Cancer Support Network so I can give back to this organization. They helped me stay sane through my diagnosis.

Through the course of my battle, I've been fortunate enough to share my story to benefit other firefighters in my state. I have been able to testify in front of our state legislature to make changes in our presumptive protections. I am praying that none of you have to go through this, but if you do you will not have to go through it alone.

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