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# Firefighter Risk & Resilience Study Newsletter Winter 2021



## California Firefighters Help Hospitals Struggling with COVID-19



<https://www.dailynews.com/2020/12/28/firefighters-join-latest-wave-of-la-county-people-getting-covid-vaccines/>

Firefighters are used to answering the call to help at a moment's notice. However, with the uncertainty that comes with a pandemic, California has turned to local firefighters to aid the latest COVID-19 surge in new ways. From receiving the vaccine themselves to taking extra shifts volunteering at hospitals, first responders are going above and beyond to ensure the safety of their communities.

Blake Dombrowski, firefighter and paramedic, explains that his team has been working in the hospitals since January 6<sup>th</sup>. Over the past few weeks, Dombrowski and his colleagues from the Fairfield Fire Department have helped Mission Community Hospital in Panorama City, Los Angeles, in whatever capacity they can serve. "We really didn't know what we were signing up for," Dombrowski continues. "[It] seems like they have been working long hours for quite some time and they were really happy to see us arrive."

Dombrowski said the COVID-19 surge in Los Angeles County was much worse than he anticipated. He and his team were tasked with starting IVs, assisting with blood draws, and moving patients to help exhausted hospital staff. This type

of help from firefighters and paramedics has since been expanded by the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services as it has positively helped alleviate the pressures put on hospital workers. At least 40 firefighter/EMTs and 58 firefighter/paramedics have been deployed statewide to assignments similar to Dombrowski and his team. These assignments are no small task either, considering most can last upwards of 14 days.

While working in hospitals has been uncharted territory for many firefighters, Los Angeles County's mission to stop the spread of COVID-19 has improved significantly from these acts of service. "What we are experiencing here is patients come in and they are short of breath. And within in a matter of hours, they are being put on ventilators and deteriorating very rapidly in comparison to what we've experienced in Northern California," Dombrowski said. However, Dombrowski shares that experiences like these have been an overwhelming reminder of why he chose to become a firefighter in the first place, to help others in need.

Firefighters in the Los Angeles

region received their COVID-19 vaccinations in late December, as first responders began to join the increasing number of "essential workers" and high-risk people. "Receiving the vaccine is a first step for our firefighters as they look forward to helping our community return to normalcy and hope as we enter 2021," said Lisa Derderian, the Public Information Officer for Pasadena.

With more than 600 Los Angeles Fire Department firefighters testing positive for COVID-19 since late December, it is most important to make sure first responders are healthy and protected themselves before helping others. "We want to make sure that those who are on the front lines exposing themselves to danger are the ones that we protect under the protocols of the vaccine first," explains Eric Garcetti, mayor of Los Angeles. "These are the folks who are always there for us, not just during COVID, but when any disaster strikes."

<https://fox40.com/news/local-news/local-firefighters-sent-to-help-hospitals-struggling-with-covid-19-across-the-state/>

<https://www.dailynews.com/2020/12/28/firefighters-join-latest-wave-of-la-county-people-getting-covid-vaccines/>

# What's New at the WRI?

The WRI welcomes a new therapist and a new BEAR intern!

## Sakina Ali

Sakina is a fourth-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at Texas A&M University. She has worked at multiple community clinics and the Austin VA as a supervised therapist. Sakina values a biopsychosocial approach when working with clients and works collaboratively with her clients to ensure their goals are met.

## Ella Schillaci

Ella joined the Warriors Research Institute team in May 2020 as a BEAR intern. She is a senior at Baylor University studying Psychology and Spanish. Ella is from Zionsville, Indiana and has had a variety of opportunities during her time at Baylor. She has done research with the Sarah Cannon Cancer Research Institute in the Drug Development Center. In her time at Baylor, she has also worked in the Mind Body Medicine Research Lab through Baylor, focusing on heart rate variability in menopausal women.

After graduation in May 2021, Ella plans to pursue a Doctorate of Clinical Psychology to serve teens dealing with mental illness and/or attend law school to continue supporting those that cannot fight for themselves.

# Fun Winter Recipe!

## Homemade Apple Cider

### Ingredients:

10-12 medium apples  
(assorted types), quartered  
2 oranges, quartered  
4 cinnamon sticks  
1 tbsp whole cloves  
1 tsp whole allspice  
1 tsp whole nutmeg  
16 cups of water  
1/2 cup brown sugar or maple  
syrup



### Instructions:

1. Add the apples, oranges, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, and nutmeg to a large stockpot. Cover with water, leaving about an inch or two of space at the top of the stockpot.
2. Heat the cider over high heat until it reaches a simmer. Then reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for about 2 hours, or until the apples are completely soft.
3. Using a potato masher or a wooden spoon, mash all of the apples and oranges against the side of the stockpot to release more of their flavors. Then cover and simmer for 1 more hour.
4. Strain out all of the solids (apples, oranges, spices) using a fine-mesh strainer or a cheesecloth, pressing them against the strainer to release all of their juices. Discard the solids.
5. Stir in your desired amount of sweetener, to taste.

# Spotlight on Service

In our newsletters, we highlight firefighter service outside the line of duty from the cities in our study. In this newsletter, we focus on Dallas, TX.



<https://txfirefighterchristmaslights.com/?fbclid=IwAR2LIZ6ZaFcBqgvtQ7Jvg3WXr7NfDnDqzERRLfOoB1Q90fFqqWts8REUu0>

## Tidings of Holiday Cheer in Dallas

While the holidays are often referred to as the most wonderful time of the year, there are always some people for whom this is not the case. This year, firefighters in the Dallas area worked to help remedy this situation in a variety of ways. Murphy Fire Rescue held its annual toy drive in the weeks leading up to Christmas, and the proceeds were donated to the Children's Advocacy Center of Collin County. The fire department housed a contact-free delivery point so that their seasonal tradition could continue in compliance with COVID-19 regulations.

Texas Firefighter Christmas Lights also found a way to serve the community during the holidays, as they designed and installed Christmas lights for both residential and commercial clients. All light installations were supervised by a firefighter to ensure fire regulations were enforced. The organization is a subset of Firefighter Home Renovations, a company founded in 2013 by career firefighter Brian Belows. The organization is located in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and acts as a way to give back to the community by providing some decorations that help to light up the Christmas season.

Firefighters themselves also received tidings of goodwill on

Christmas day, for the nonprofit organization Feed-a-Hero distributed over 5,000 meals to first responders throughout north Texas as thanks for their service to the community. One of the organization's volunteers helping at Dallas Fire Station 54 stated, "I think this is going to make Christmas a little brighter, because we were able to provide joy and hope to someone else." This sentiment is one that was certainly reflected throughout the city, as firefighters united to help lead the way in supporting one other and spreading cheer during the holidays.

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/north-texas-nonprofit-delivers-thousands-of-meals-to-first-responders-on-christmas-day/2513697/>

<https://localprofile.com/2020/11/16/murphy-fire-rescue-annual-toy-drive-begins/>

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# Moving? Changing your phone number?

If so, please let us know so we can update  
our information.

Contact Megan Cardenas at:

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OR

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