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For Immediate Release

Contact: Dona Wininsky
262-703-4840 (direct)
414-426-3086 (cell)

Taking the Stairs in 2017

For Firefighters, Climbing in the Fight For Air Climb is Personal

Brookfield, WI (February 23, 2017) – Every year, hundreds of firefighters throughout Wisconsin load themselves down with 50-75 lbs. of gear the climb the 1000+ stairs at the US Bank Center for the American Lung Association’s Fight For Air Climb. They are joined by police officers and other rescue workers in the Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield Firefighter Challenge, one of the highlights of the annual fundraising event.

Firefighters climb to support the American Lung Association, but firefighters themselves face their own unique risks of lung disease:

- Respiratory diseases are a significant health issue for firefighters and emergency responders
- Firefighters are exposed to gases, chemicals, particle pollution and other potentially harmful substances that can have long and short-term effects on their lungs
- Firefighters are at higher risk to develop chronic lung issues, including lingering cough, hoarseness, asthma and allergies, and in more extreme cases, lung or bronchial cancer

To date, 159 firefighters on 36 teams* are registered for the 2017 Fight For Air Climb. The teams compete against each other in four categories: fastest team score, fastest individual score, highest fundraising team and highest fundraising individual.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Wisconsin is the Fight for Air Climb’s Presenting Sponsor and the title sponsor of the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Firefighter Challenge.

“Firefighters and first responders keep us safe and healthy every day,” said Paul Nobile, president of Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Wisconsin. “The best part about the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Firefighter Challenge is that it gives all of us a chance to applaud and cheer on these heroes who do so much for us and ask for so little in return.”

Linda Witucki, Executive Director of the ALA.W said, “Firefighters not only risk their lives every time they go into a burning building, they also suffer a greater degree of lung disease, due to their exposure to harmful smoke, chemicals and toxins. These guys know firsthand what it’s like to struggle to breathe.”

Other fun facts about the Anthem Firefighter Challenge:

- West Allis Fire Department has won the Challenge six out of the last eight years

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- Sheboygan Fire Department won the Challenge in 2015 and is out to reclaim their title in 2017
- Over the years, firefighters have come from more than 22 Wisconsin and Illinois counties, from as far south as Skokie, IL, west as Mount Horeb, and as far north as Manitowoc.
- West Allis firefighter Zeke Dombroski was the fastest firefighter climber in 2016, with a time of 6:54
- Chuck Roberts of the Eagle Fire Department was the #1 overall individual fundraiser in 2016, singlehandedly raising \$10,470
- Lauderdale-LaGrange Fire Department was the #1 firefighter fundraising team in 2016, raising \$11,455
- Firefighters from Kohler and Beaver Dam have been spotted in their home communities training for the Climb (photos attached)
- Milwaukee Deputy Chief Aaron Lipski and West Allis Interim Fire Chief Mason Pooler have climbed in all nine Milwaukee climbs

Firefighter Teams registered as of 2/22/17 (linked to their team page):

[Beaver Dam Firefighters](#)

[Bloomfield Genoa City Fire & Rescue](#)

[Eagle Fire Department](#)

[Fire Explorers Post 4732](#)

[Fitchburg Fire Department](#)

[Franklin Fire Department](#)

[Greenfield Fire Department](#)

[Hales Corners FD](#)

[Jackson Fire Department](#)

[Kohler Fire Department](#)

[Lauderdale-LaGrange Fire](#)

[Department](#)

[Madison Fire](#)

[Manitowoc Fire Department](#)

[McFarland Fire Department](#)

[Mequon Fire](#)

[Middleton Fire District](#)

[Milwaukee Fire Department](#)

Mount Horeb

[New Berlin Fire Department](#)

[North Prairie Fire Department](#)

Oconomowoc Fire Department

[Rochester Volunteer Fire Co.](#)

[SC Johnson - Racine](#)

[Sheboygan Fire Department](#)

[Somers Fire Department](#)

[Sun Prairie Fire Department](#)

[Tichigan Fire](#)

[Town of Burlington Fire Department](#)

[Town of Madison Fire Department](#)

[Town of Salem Fire/Rescue](#)

[Town of Lyons Fire Department](#)

[Waukesha Fire Department](#)

[Wauwatosa Fire Department](#)

[West Allis Fire Department](#)

[Wind Lake Fire Department](#)

The Milwaukee Climb remains the #1 FFA Climb in the nation, both in terms of participants and fundraising.

For more information on individual teams and links to their team pages, please contact Amanda Stengel, 262-395-1701.

The 2017 *Fight For Air Climb* takes place at the US Bank Center in downtown Milwaukee on Saturday, March 18, starting at 6:30a.m. for our Ultimate Climbers, and from 8a.m. am until all climbers finish. To register, please visit www.fightforairclimb.org. Registration fee is \$25; an additional \$100 fundraising minimum is required to participate.

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Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWi), Compcare Health Services Insurance Corporation (Compcare) and Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Company (WCIC). BCBSWi underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by Compcare or WCIC; Compcare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. ANTHEM is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Well Priority is a service mark of Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Company. Additional information about Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Wisconsin is available at www.anthem.com. Also, follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/askanthem and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/askanthem.

About the American Lung Association in Wisconsin: Our mission is to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease. With your generous support, the American Lung Association is "Fighting for Air" through research, education and advocacy. For more information about the American Lung Association or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) or visit www.Lung.org

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