

For Immediate Release

**U.S. REP. CUNNINGHAM INTRODUCES BILL
TO ESTABLISH 'OFFICE OF MEN'S HEALTH'**

*Congress, National Organization Respond to Increasing Support for
Men's Health Issues in National Health Care Debate*

WASHINGTON, April 10, 2003 – The Men's Health Network applauded U.S. Representative Randy "Duke" Cunningham (R-San Diego) today for introducing the "Men's Health Act of 2003." The legislation would establish an Office of Men's Health within the Department of Health and Human Services for the purpose of promoting men's health in the United States. The bill has a bipartisan core group of 41 original co-sponsors.

"The health disparity between men and women of all racial and ethnic backgrounds continues to exist in terms of health and mortality," said Megan Smith, director of public affairs for MHN. "Now more than ever steps are needed to improve on these numbers. Establishing an 'Office of Men's Health' is the logical place to start."

"Men simply need to be encouraged to go to the doctor and become more in tune with their own health. And an Office of Men's Health would be the ideal tool to make this happen," said Betty Gallo, Director of Public Outreach and Dean and Betty Gallo Prostate Center at the Cancer Institute of New Jersey. "If such a step can be taken at the federal level, the result would be a positive trickle down effect to state and local communities."

Statistics show that increased research, prevention and awareness are key to improving health. "American men need better education on health risks that affect them. The lives of hundreds of thousands of men will continue to be threatened unless immediate action is taken to combat this growing crisis," said U.S. Representative Cunningham.

According to a recent report from the U.S. Center for Disease Control, women's life expectancy rose from 79.7 to 79.8 years. White women have the highest life expectancy, 80.2 years, followed by black women (75.5 years), white men (75 years) and black men (68.6 years).

"This is a crucial step in giving men's health issues the prominence they deserve. Congressman Cunningham is to be congratulated for continuing to support the creation of this important office," said William F. Gee, M.D., chair of the American Urological Association Health Policy Council. "It's important that men's health issues be brought into the public spotlight at the national level."

“Illness and disease among men have significant impact on every facet of society,” said Jean Bonhomme, MD, MPH and Men’s Health Network Board Member. “Women and children are affected economically and emotionally by men's unnecessary disability and premature death as well as by health care costs. An Office of Men’s Health has great potential for uplifting the health status of our nation as a whole.”

The office will be designed to monitor and coordinate efforts to improve the health and well-being of men by streamlining government efforts on the federal and state levels in the areas of prevention, health education, outreach, and research. This office will mirror the existing Office of Women’s Health which was established in the early 1990s, and has already improved the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of women.

Men’s Health Network was created in 1991 by nationally recognized men’s advocates to provide a voice for those concerned about the growing men’s health crisis. It is an informational and educational organization that recognizes men’s health as a specific social concern and is committed to promoting issues affecting men’s health and the health and well-being of their families and can be reached at (202) 543-6461 x 101.