

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Men's Health Network calls on Congress to complete President Obama's promise on health care reform**

Prostate cancer tests promised but not delivered

**Washington, DC** (Dec. 15, 2009) – Men's Health Network calls on Congress to ensure that healthcare reform does not override the prostate cancer testing benefit currently required of insurance companies in 37 states.

Prostate cancer screening is particularly important for those segments of the population and individuals who are identifiable as high risk, including African American men and men who have a family history of prostate cancer. The American Urological Association currently recommends that men age 40 consider a "baseline" prostate cancer test.

"My husband, the Late Congressman Dean Gallo did not have the benefit of the PSA as a prostate cancer screening method in 1991. Therefore, in 1992 he was diagnosed with late stage prostate cancer. It was stage 4 and he had a PSA of 883. If the PSA test was available my husband would not have died from this disease. A complete prostate cancer exam, including the DRE and PSA, identifies cancers while they can still be treated and should be made available to all men aged 40 and above," shared Betty Gallo, Co-Founder of Women Against Prostate Cancer.

Recent changes in national guidelines for mammography screenings from the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) have caused a flurry of discussion around the role of the Task Force. Men's Health Network has monitored their recommendations closely for many years and is concerned that the USPSTF does not recommend prostate cancer testing even while the use of the DRE and PSA continues to save lives.

A new proposal in the Senate health care debate would let people aged 55-64 buy into Medicare. If this passes it could lead to a significant increase in the number of men who have access to prostate cancer tests through the "Welcome to Medicare" physical, offered to every person entering Medicare. And, one can only ask, why should the general population receive services inferior to those offered to Medicare recipients, such as the tests in the "Welcome to Medicare" physical?

Prostate cancer testing has been supported by a resolution of the Democratic National Committee in September 2009 and by President Obama in a town hall meeting and again in a Weekly Address on August 15. President Obama said that he would "require insurance companies to cover routine checkups and preventive care" so that "diseases like breast cancer and prostate cancer" can be detected early.

While Senator Mikulski's amendment has passed to ensure protections for women's preventive services, no such amendment is being proposed to ensure that men received the same protections for prostate or other screenings.

“We call on Congress to complete President Obama’s promise to provide prostate screening in the health reform bill in addition to the breast cancer screening recently added,” stated Scott Williams, VP for Men’s Health Network.

Men’s Health Network ([www.menshealthnetwork.org](http://www.menshealthnetwork.org)), a national non-profit organization, reaches men and their families where they live, work, play, and pray.

###