

RECOGNIZING WORK OF CONGRESSIONAL MEN'S HEALTH CAUCUS

HON. VITO FOSSELLA OF NEW YORK IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 6, 2007

Mr. FOSSELLA. Madam Speaker, as a founding member of the Congressional Men's Health Caucus I am very pleased to report a groundswell of activity occurring as I speak today across the country related to men's health education, outreach, awareness, and screening. This focus and attention is long overdue. New data provide alarming statistics about a gradual decline in men's health. In fact, men are living on average about 5 years less than their female counterparts, men are leading in 9 out of 10 top causes of death, 1 in 2 men in their lifetime will be diagnosed with cancer compared to 1 in 3 women, and as women enter retirement (65–69 years of age) approximately 15 percent are widows due to the premature death/disability of men.

I am proud to work with the Men's Health Network, MHN, to raise awareness of men's health; they, for over 15 years, have taken the lead nationally in setting best practices, creating grassroots networks and activism, and providing health services to men and their families where they live, work, play, and pray.

Under their leadership we are seeing symposia, screening events, and campaigns launched all across the country aimed at reversing the negative trends in men's health. In November and December of 2007 alone, they have led community/neighborhood development efforts resulting in a Massachusetts Symposium on Men's Health, Louisiana Symposium on Men's Health, Florida Smoking Policy Symposium, "Healthy Sunday" church screening at Bethel A.M.E. Church in Baton Rouge, LA, and will launch a Women Against Prostate Cancer organization in conjunction with the Dean and Betty Gallo Prostate Cancer Center. Each of these programs and initiatives makes it a priority to empower men, women, and their families to live healthier lifestyles. These efforts are engineered to reach underserved populations who don't have access to health services or health education materials.

Women Against Prostate Cancer is a new organization, founded by Men's Health Network in conjunction with the Dean and Betty Gallo Prostate Cancer Center, that is developing a grassroots network of women volunteers who have been adversely affected by prostate cancer. The National Cancer Institute estimates 219,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer, resulting in more than 27,000 deaths this year. Meanwhile, the state symposia create opportunities for networking for men's health and community outreach organizations throughout the State(s), as well as encourage preventative health measures and physician and patient dialogue.

Actions like these can save lives and, more importantly, American families. I along with my colleagues belonging to the Congressional Men's Health Caucus am proud to support these continued efforts while continually stressing the need to establish an Office of Men's Health within the Department of Health and Human Services.

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