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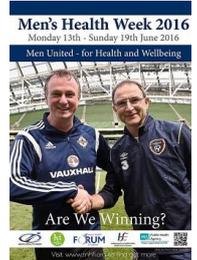
## **Men United - for Health and Wellbeing**

### **Martin O'Neill and Michael O'Neill unite to launch Men's Health Week**

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**National Football Managers, Martin O'Neill and Michael O'Neill, have joined forces to help to launch International Men's Health Week, reminding Irish men of the importance of managing their own health.**

Announcing that the theme for this year's event is 'Men United', organisers expressed their gratitude to the soccer managers for coming together in this unique way, especially just before the start of the long awaited Euro 2016 Championship.



As many Irish men gather to enjoy the football, they are also encouraged to unite in taking action to improve their own health. With Irish men experiencing higher death rates than women for all leading causes of death, and dying on average four and a half years younger than women, it is important that men realise how big an impact they can make by taking even small steps.

Speaking at the launch of the week, Mr Finian Murray, HSE Men's Health Development Officer said:

*"We are delighted that Martin and Michael agreed to help us to launch this year's event. Their support underlines just how important they consider it to be for Irish men on both sides of the border to take steps to look after their health. While we are enjoying Euro 2016, we can decide that we also want to be able to enjoy the forthcoming sporting, and indeed all celebratory events, over the coming years and decades. However, to be able to do this, we need to attend to our own health needs now."*

Mr Murray added:

*"Many men across the island are very knowledgeable about their sporting interests and hobbies. We just want them to invest a little time in themselves, and to act now to ensure that their good health is maintained and any issues that may arise are addressed swiftly. Men in Ireland experience a disproportionate burden of ill health and die too young, but it is not a lost cause. Men's Health Week seeks to do something positive to challenge this situation."*

With the health of Irish men generally considered to be poor compared to women's health, it is acknowledged that better lifestyles and choices would result in significant improvements. Late presentation to health services often leads to conditions that could have been treated and managed becoming untreatable.

The high level of premature mortality amongst men in Ireland has far reaching consequences - it has a social and financial impact on society and in particular on families. Men's Health Week seeks to support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices and activities, encourage the early detection and treatment of health issues, and heighten awareness of preventable health problems, including mental health challenges.

To support Men's Health Week 2016, the Men's Health Forum in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)) has produced a free 32 page Man Manual. Titled 'Challenges and Choices', the publication poses practical challenges and encourages men to make simple lifestyle changes.

Acknowledging that the HSE is pleased to be working closely with the Men's Health Forum in Ireland on this important campaign, Dr Cate Hartigan, HSE Assistant National Director, Health Promotion and Improvement stated:

*"Evidence clearly shows that there are many challenges to be faced when seeking to improve men's health. However, it also highlights that men's health can be improved in many significant ways - if men make the right choices, and are given the support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed. This Man Manual provides the information and the tools, and Men's Health Week offers the opportunity to make a positive change. I am delighted that the Health Service Executive was able to support the production of this much-requested booklet".*

Helping to launch Men's Health Week 2016 in Government Buildings, Dublin, the Minister for Health Simon Harris, added:

*"Ireland was the first country in the world to adopt a National Men's Health Policy. Over the next few weeks, men and boys of all ages and backgrounds on the island of Ireland will be captivated by the exploits of some of the fittest athletes in the world. Those athletes, as well as managers Martin O'Neill and Michael O'Neill, know the importance of*

*having a squad which is healthy in both mind and body. I would encourage all men and boys to support Men's Health Week, to unite to improve their health and, of course, to enjoy themselves at the same time."*

[See attached photograph of Minister for Health Simon Harris at the launch of Men's Health Week with some members of the all-island Planning Group]

**ENDS - followed by Editor's Notes**

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## **Editor's Notes:**

Further information on Men's Health Week 2016 can be obtained by contacting ...

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- Men's Health Week always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year, it will run from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and a number of other places worldwide. It is coordinated on the island of Ireland by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI).
  - The Men's Health Forum in Ireland ([www.mhfi.org](http://www.mhfi.org)) is a charity which works on an all-island basis to enhance the health of men and boys. It is a voluntary network of individuals and organisations, men and women, which seeks to identify the key concerns relating to male health and to increase understanding of these issues.

- The core aims of Men's Health Week each year are to:
  - Heighten awareness of preventable health problems for males of all ages.
  - Support men and boys to engage in healthier lifestyle choices / activities.
  - Encourage the early detection and treatment of health difficulties in males.
- Each year, individual countries focus upon a specific theme. The theme for 2016 on the island of Ireland is: *'Men United for health and wellbeing'*. Everyone is asked to pose the question: *'are we winning?'* If not, then it's time to do something positive and practical to change this situation.
- Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency, all-island Planning Group.
- The celebration of Men's Health Week has been supported by the Health Service Executive's Health Promotion and Improvement Department and the National Office for Suicide Prevention in the Republic of Ireland, and the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland.
- Key information on Men's Health Week on the island of Ireland is available online ...
  - Full overview of Men's Health Week 2016: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2016.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2016.html)
  - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2016toolbox.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016toolbox.pdf)
  - Men's Health Week posters and images: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-image-pack.html)
  - Practical suggestions for organisations on how they can get involved: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2016celebrateit.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2016celebrateit.pdf)
  - Latest developments: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)
- Martin O'Neill (Republic of Ireland Team Manager) and Michael O'Neill (Northern Ireland Team Manager) are acting as the 'face' of Men's Health Week 2016 in Ireland. They are starring in a nationwide poster and postcard campaign, and appear on the cover of the free, 32 page 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual which is being given to men across the island of Ireland.
- The 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual issues ten simple and practical challenges to men. After each challenge, there is a reason why it is important to think about this issue. It then offers three choices for action (Do Nothing, DIY, Find an Expert), and explains the consequences of each option.
- Production of the 'Challenges and Choices' manual was funded by the Health Service Executive in the Republic of Ireland, Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland, and the Irish Pharmacy Union.
- A low resolution PDF preview copy of the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual can be accessed online at: [www.mhfi.org/challenges2016.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/challenges2016.pdf)

- The total number of resources distributed throughout the island of Ireland for Men's Health Week 2016 was ...
  - 47,000 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manuals
  - 7,000 posters
  - 12,000 postcards
  
- Minister for Health, Simon Harris, met with some members of the Men's Health Week Planning Group at Government Buildings in Dublin to help to launch Men's Health Week. Download the photograph at: [www.mhfi.org/MinisterHarris.jpg](http://www.mhfi.org/MinisterHarris.jpg)

