

PRESS RELEASE: For use on Friday 12th June 2015 and later

Health Minister Leo Varadkar and Irish Rugby Legend Tony Ward Call for a ‘New Script’ for Men’s Health in Ireland

Today, Minister for Health Leo Varadkar will join with Irish Rugby legend Tony Ward to begin the final countdown to Men’s Health Week in Ireland. To kick-start the week, Minister Varadkar has invited Tony - this year’s ‘face’ of Men’s Health Week - to Government Buildings for a health check-up.

Together, they are calling upon everyone in Ireland to create culture change in relation to men’s health.

Tony knows the importance of this message only too well following his own personal battle with prostate cancer [please see attached photograph].

But, why should we focus upon men’s health? Well, the reasons are both clear and stark ...

- Men in Ireland die, on average, almost four and a half years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death and at all ages.
- Poor lifestyles are responsible for a high proportion of chronic diseases.
- Late presentation to health services leads to a large number of problems becoming untreatable ...

This high level of premature mortality amongst men in Ireland has far-reaching repercussions - far beyond the life satisfaction of men themselves. It affects not only industry and commerce, but also impacts upon the social and financial positions of families.

However, this is not a lost cause. Much can be done to improve this situation. That is why Men’s Health Week this year focuses upon the theme of „Creating Culture Change - it’s time for a new script“.

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 15th until Sunday 21st June 2015. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia, New Zealand and a number of other places worldwide. Locally, it is coordinated by the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI).

Preasráiteas: Aoine 12 Meitheamh 2015

‘Leathanach Nua’ atá de dhíth do Shláinte na bhFear in Éirinn dar leis an tAire Sláinte Leo Varadkar agus Laoch Rugbaí na hÉireann – Tony Ward.

Inniu, cuirfidh an tAire Sláinte Leo Varadkar in éineacht leis an laoch Rugbaí Éireannach Tony Ward tús le Seachtain Sláinte na bhFear in Éirinn. Chun tús a chur leis an tseachtain, tá cuireadh tugtha ag an Aire Varadkar do Tony dul go dtí Tithe an Rialtais i gcomhair scrúdú sláinte. Tá Tony mar eiseamláir do Sheachtain Shláinte na bhFear i mbliana.

Tádar beirt ag impí ar gach duine in Éirinn an cultúr a athrú i dtaobh sláinte na bhfear de.

Is maith a thuigeann Tony an teachtaireacht seo, go mór mhór i ndíadh dó féin a bheith ag fulaingt le hailse phróstataigh (féach an grianghraf ceangailte leis seo).

Ach cén fáth ar chóir dúinn béim a leagan ar shláinte na bhfear?

- Ar an meán, cailltear fir in Éirinn tuairim is ceithre bliana go leith roimh na mná.
- Tá rátaí báis níos airde i measc fir i gcomparáid leis na mná i gcomhair gach ceann de na príomhchúiseanna báis ag gach aois.
- Nósanna maireachtála dona is cúis le sciar mór de ghalair ainsleacha.
- Bíonn sé deacair fadhbanna sláinte a chóireáil de bharr nach dtagann daoine go dtí na seirbhísí sláinte in am.....

Tá impleachtaí tromchúiseacha ag an ráta báis ard seo i measc fir na hÉireann – impleachtaí atá níos forleithne ná sásaimh saoil na bhfir iad féin. Mar shampla, cuireann sé isteach ar an dtionsclaíocht, ar chúrsaí gnó, ach ní amháin sin, cuireann sé isteach ar theallaigh ar bhonn sóisialta agus airgeadais.

Níl an tuáille caite isteach áfach. Is féidir go leor a dhéanamh chun an staid seo a fheabhsú. Sin é an fáth a bhfuil béim againn i mbliana ar ‘Athrú Chultúr – tá sé in am an scéal a athrú.’

I gcónaí, cuirtear tús le Seachtain na bhFear ar an Luan roimh *Father’s Day* agus críochnaíonn sé ar *Lá na nAthar* féin. I mbliana, beidh sé ar siúl ón Luan 15ú lá go dtí an Domhnach 21ú Meitheamh 2015. Déantar an lá seo a cheiliúradh i bhformhór na dtíortha Eorpacha chomh maith le S.A.M., An Astráil, An Nua Shéalainn agus in áiteanna eile ar fud an domhain. Fóram Sláinte na bhFear a dhéanann comhordú air anseo in Éirinn.

To celebrate this week, MHFI has printed a new, free, 32 page Man Manual titled, "Challenges and Choices". This booklet poses a series of simple, practical challenges to Irish men in an effort to radically improve their health. The health messages are presented in a humorous, straightforward, step-by-step, and commonsense way, and the opening pages begin with:

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"WARNING ... Reading this manual can seriously improve your health!"

There has been a huge demand for the Manual from men across Ireland and, since its release three weeks ago, almost all of the 10,000 copies available have been snapped-up.

Minister Varadkar comments:

"Men's health in Ireland isn't always the best. My Department's Healthy Ireland initiative is doing a lot of work to raise awareness in this area, but there's a long way to go. That's why this Men's Health Week is such a great idea. It shows that men can make significant improvements to their health by taking a few simple steps, and receiving encouragement and opportunities to succeed. The advice is jargon-free, and offers lots of support. I'm delighted that the HSE is supporting this initiative."

Cate Hartigan, Head of Health Promotion and Improvement in the HSE, reflects:

"Interest in men's health is certainly increasing, and not only amongst policy makers and service providers. Men, themselves, are rising to the challenge, and seeking information to help them to make positive choices. The HSE is delighted to assist the Men's Health Forum in Ireland to support this movement and to make Men's Health Week 2015 the time to create a new culture in Ireland."

In relation to his role in Men's Health Week 2015, sporting hero Tony Ward comments:

"Men's Health Week gives everyone an opportunity to do something positive and practical to improve the health of men and boys in Ireland. I know, from personal experience, that men certainly need to pay more attention to their health and to act quickly when they suspect something may be wrong. However, we live in a culture which expects men to keep their chin up and to soldier on through difficult times. This needs to change. It's definitely time for a new script."

Chun an tseachtain seo a cheilliúradh, tá 'Man Manual' 32 leathanach curtha i gcló ag MHFI darbh ainm "Challenges and Choices." Cuireann an leabhrán seo dushláin simplí roimhe fhir na hÉireann ar mhaith lena sláinte a fheabhsú go mór. Tá na teachtaireachtaí sláinte seo curtha faoina mbráid le greann, go díreach, céim ar chéim agus go ciallmhar.

Tosaíonn an leathanach tosaigh le:

Preasráiteas: I gcomhair an 12ú Meitheamh 2015.

Agus ina dhiaidh sin_

Rabhadh... "Má léann tú an leabhrán seo, d'fhéadfadh feabhas teacht ar do shláinte."

Tá éifeamh mór ar an leabhrán seo ó fhir fud fad na hÉireann agus tá breis is 10,000 dáilithe ó seoladh é trí sheachtain ó shin.

Dar leis an Aire Vradakar:

"Níl sláinte na bhfear in Éirinn sách maith. Tá go leor á dhéanamh ag an tionscnamh seo de chuid mo Roinnsa dar teideal *Healthy Ireland* chun feacht na bhfear a ardú ina leith seo, ach sin ráite, tá bealach fada romhainn. Sin é an fáth gur an-smaoineamh é Seachtain Sláinte na bhFear. Léiríonn sé d'fhir gur féidir leo feabhas a chur ar a gcuid sláinte féin ach céimeanna simplí a ghlacadh, chomh maith le spreagadh ó dhaoine eile ionas go néireoidh leo. Teachtaireacht tacaíochta gan aon bhéarlagair atá anseo. Tá an-áthas orm go bhfuil FnaSS ag tacú leis an tionscnamh seo."

Dar le Cate Hartigan, Ceannasaí Chothú na Sláinte:

Níl aon dabht ach go bhfuil an suim atá i Sláinte na bhFear ag dul i méid, ní amháin i measc lucht déanta beartais agus solathróirí seirbhíse. Tá fir ag cur suim ann chomh maith agus ag lorg eolais chun go mbeidh siad in ann cinntí dearfacha a dhéanamh. Tá ríméad ar FnaSS tacú le Fóram Sláinte na bhFear chun tacaíocht a thabhairt don ghluaiseacht seo agus tacú le Seachtain Sláinte na bhFear ar mhaithe le cultúr na sláinte a athrú in Éirinn."

Maidir leis an ról atá ag Tony Ward le linn Seachtain na bhFear:

Tugann Seachtain Sláinte na bhFear seans do gach duine chun rud éigin dearfach a dhéanamh chun sláinte fir agus buachaillí a fheabhsú in Éirinn. Tá a fhios agam ó mo thaithí féin nach mór d'fhir aird a thabhairt ar a sláinte agus gníomhú go tapaidh nuair a shíleann siad go mbfhéidir go bhfuil rud éigin mícheart. Ach faraor, ní sin mar atá sa gcultúr ina mhaireann muid, cultúr atá ag súil nach dtabharfaidh fir aghaidh ar fhadhbanna mar seo agus go leanfaidh siad orthu ar nós nach bhfuil aon rud mícheart. Caithfear é seo a athrú. Tá sé in am an scéal seo a athrú."