

## **Minister of State for Health Promotion Launches Countdown to Men's Health Week 2017**

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**This year marks the eighteenth celebration of Men's Health Week (MHW) in Ireland. MHW aims to increase awareness of the specific health needs of men and boys and to encourage them to think about their health and lifestyle behaviours. The week is coordinated by the Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI), a charity which works on an all-island basis to enhance the health of men and boys.**

This year's MHW focus is 'It's all about HIM' (i.e. the recently launched **Healthy Ireland Men Action Plan**) and the need to make men's health issues a priority in Ireland.

Another key objective of MHW is to involve a broad range of health professionals, service providers, youth groups, sporting bodies, community organisations, employers, Churches, policy makers, family workers and pharmacists ... who can support and encourage the early detection and treatment of health issues facing men. This year, there are over 70 partner organisations working together to promote different topics during the week, and social media messaging will target diverse issues such as:

Saturday 10th June - Top Tips for Men's Mental Fitness

Sunday 11th June - Keeping your Heart Healthy

Monday 12th June - Input and Output ... Men, Food and Physical Activity

Tuesday 13th June - Trash the Ash ... Men and Smoking

Wednesday 14th June - One More for the Road? ... Men and Alcohol

Thursday 15th June - Men Overcoming Cancer

Friday 16th June - Men and Sexual Health

Saturday 17th June - Men and Healthy Relationships

Sunday 18th June - The Importance of Fathers to Children's Outcomes

To view the social media Posts and Tweets planned for the week (#MHW2017), visit: [www.mhfi.org/Tweets2017.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/Tweets2017.pdf)

Minister Corcoran Kennedy met members of the inter-agency all-island Men's Health Week Planning Group to start the launch of Men's Health Week this year. At the launch, Minister Corcoran Kennedy said:



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*“My Department is committed to the promotion of health and wellbeing for everyone, and I commend all those involved in promoting Men’s Health Week 2017. I would stress the importance of health awareness, screening and support of friends, families and communities in maintaining good health.”*

Despite this ground-breaking achievement, Irish men still experience higher death rates than women for all the leading causes of death and die, on average, four and a half years younger. During this week, MHFI is asking service providers and men to answer the question: ‘how are you doing?’ and to consider making changes if needed. It is acknowledged that even simple changes can result in significant improvements. Indeed, late presentation to health services often leads to conditions that could have been successfully managed becoming untreatable.

Fergal Fox, Acting General Manager for Health Promotion and Improvement in the HSE adds:

*“Supporting men’s health and wellbeing is a part of our work under our plan to implement the ‘Healthy Ireland’ framework. This week HSE Health Promotion & Improvement are working with our internal partners (Mental Health, Tobacco, Alcohol, Health Eating & Active Living, Screening and Sexual Health) across the HSE to highlight the services we provide in order to encourage men and boys of all ages to make healthier lifestyle choices.”*

To support Men’s Health Week 2017, the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland 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.

Finian Murray, HSE Men’s Health Development Officer and a member of the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland, states:

*“Evidence clearly shows that men’s health can be improved in many significant ways - if men are offered positive choices, and are given the support, encouragement and opportunities to succeed. This Man Manual provides the information and the tools, while Men’s Health Week provides the opportunity to make a real change.”*

**[See attached photograph of Minister of State for Health Promotion Marcella Corcoran Kennedy at the launch of Men’s Health Week with some members of the all-island Planning Group]**

**ENDS - followed by Editor’s Notes**

## **Editor's Notes:**

Further information on Men's Health Week 2017 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 12<sup>th</sup> until Sunday 18<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 2017 on the island of Ireland is: *'It's all about HIM'*. This, therefore, focuses upon the 'Healthy Ireland Men' Action Plan, and everyone is asked the question: *'how are you doing?'* If the answer is *'not very well'*, then they are invited to do something that will make a positive difference to the health of the men and boys that they have contact with and influence over.
- Men's Health Week 2017 in Ireland has been planned by a broad range of partners who contributed to an inter-agency, all-island Planning Group.

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- 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 2017: [www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw/mhw-2017.html)
  - Briefing paper which answers all the most common questions: [www.mhfi.org/mhw2017toolbox.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2017toolbox.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/mhw2017celebrateit.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/mhw2017celebrateit.pdf)
  - Latest developments: [www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek](https://www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek) and [www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL](https://www.twitter.com/MensHealthIRL)
- A copy of the Healthy Ireland Men Action Plan can be accessed at: [www.mhfi.org/Hi-M.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/Hi-M.pdf) and Ireland's National Men's Health Policy at: [www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/menshealthpolicy.pdf)
- Copies of the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual have been given out to men across Ireland. This booklet 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 and the Public Health Agency in Northern Ireland.
- A low resolution PDF preview copy of the 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manual can be accessed online at: [www.mhfi.org/challenges2017.pdf](http://www.mhfi.org/challenges2017.pdf)
- The total number of resources distributed throughout the island of Ireland for Men's Health Week 2017 was ...
  - 12,200 'Challenges and Choices' Man Manuals
  - 6,000 posters
  - 10,000 postcards
- Minister of State for Health Promotion, Marcella Corcoran Kennedy TD, 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/MinisterCorcoranKennedy.jpg](http://www.mhfi.org/MinisterCorcoranKennedy.jpg)

