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AMA WELCOMES NATIONAL MALE HEALTH STRATEGY

The AMA welcomes today’s announcement of the establishment of a 10-year National Male Health Strategy that will target the mental and physical health of men and boys.

The AMA called for a major overhaul of men’s health policy in April this year, including a new national strategy to address the different expectations, experiences, and situations facing Australian men.

AMA President, Dr Tony Bartone, said the AMA was pleased that the Federal Government recognised that Australian males have poorer health outcomes, on average, than Australian females.

“In Australia, men have a life expectancy of approximately four years less than women, and have a higher mortality rate from most leading causes of death,” Dr Bartone said.

“Australian men are less likely to seek treatment from a general practitioner or other health professional, and are less likely to have the supports and social connections needed when they experience physical and mental health problems.

“An appropriately-funded and implemented National Male Health Strategy is needed to deliver a cohesive platform for the improvement of male health service access and men’s health outcomes.

“This does not mean taking funding away from women’s health strategies. Initiatives that address the health needs of one gender should not occur at the expense of the other.

“Men and women should be given equal opportunity to realise their potential for a healthy life.

“The AMA congratulates Health Minister, Greg Hunt, for his decision to begin the process to establish a National Male Health Strategy for the period 2020 to 2030.

“We look forward to engaging with the Turnbull Government to develop initiatives to address the reasons why men are reluctant to engage with GPs, and the consequence of that reluctance, and to invest in innovative models of care than overcome these barriers.

“Compared to women, Australian men not only see their GP less often but, when they do see a doctor, it is for shorter consultations, and typically when a condition or illness is advanced.

“Men’s Health Week is an opportune time for Australian men to do something positive for their physical or mental health – book in for a preventive health check with a trusted GP, get some exercise, have an extra alcohol-free day, or reach out to check on the wellbeing of a mate.”

The AMA *Position Statement on Men’s Health 2018* is at <https://ama.com.au/position-statement/mens-health-2018>

Background

- Australian men are more than twice as likely to die in a motor vehicle accident than Australian women.
 - Men have a lower five-year survival rate for all cancers than women.
 - Australian men experience approximately 75 per cent of the burden of drug-related harm.
 - More than three in four suicide deaths in Australia are men, and intentional self-harm is the leading cause of death in men under 54 years of age.
 - Men are more likely to be in full-time work and may have less time for medical appointments.
 - Men are traditionally employed in high-risk jobs, especially in the trades, transport, construction, and mining industries.
 - Australian men are twice as likely as Australian women to exceed the lifetime risk guidelines for alcohol consumption, with one in four men drinking at a rate that puts them at risk of alcohol-related disease.
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