

“These are Challenging Times. It’s No Joke. Let’s Talk!”
- Local Comedians Star in Men’s Health Week 2011 Poster Campaign

Men in Ireland are often accused of being forgetful, especially when it comes to remembering significant dates such as birthdays and anniversaries. However, while this might sometimes be true, there’s a date that all men need to know about - as it could help to save their life.

International Men’s Health Week 2011 (coordinated locally by the Men’s Health Forum in Ireland) will run from Monday 13th until Sunday 19th June this year. To highlight this week, respected local comedians [Joe Rooney](#) (*Father Ted* and *Killinaskully*) and [Paul Tylak](#) (*Stew* and *Messers Tylak and Rooney*) are starring in an Ireland-wide poster campaign to raise awareness of the week. The posters, which are being launched today, give a simple message to men: “These are challenging times. It’s no joke. Let’s talk”.

The Men’s Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is calling upon organisations and individuals throughout the whole island of Ireland to display a copy of this poster, show their support for MHW 2011, and raise public awareness of men’s health issues.

The health of men in Ireland is nothing to joke about:

- Local men die, on average, about five years younger than women do.
- Males have higher death rates than women for all of the leading causes of death.
- 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 ...

Dr Noel Richardson, the Chairperson of MHFI, has stated: *“The world of men and boys, and the roles that they play in it, have certainly changed dramatically in a very short period of time. All of these changes bring new challenges - both positive and negative. It’s time we started to talk about this situation, before it’s too late”.*

There are plenty of issues that need to be talked about ...

- The current **economic recession** has made a huge impact upon men's jobs, status, income, spending, lifestyle, debt, and sense of security. It has also made a major difference to their mental, physical and emotional health.
- On average, men are now **living longer** than at any time in history, but they are not, necessarily, healthier.
- Men face a range of **acute and chronic illnesses**, many of which are preventable.
- **Obesity and sedentary lifestyles** are on the increase, while healthy eating and exercise are decreasing.
- **Depression** in men is becoming more prevalent (or at least acknowledged) and the male **suicide** rate is still extremely high.
- Males are often not aware of where and **how to find help** and support.
- Young men (particularly) engage in a range of **high-risk activities**.
- There is increasing recognition that males can be **victims of domestic abuse**.
- Many men have an interest in sport, but tend to drop away from **active participation** in it as they get older.
- The Republic of Ireland has a Men's **Health Policy**, but is it making a difference? On the other hand, Northern Ireland does not even have a formal framework for evaluating if men's health needs are being met ...

During MHW 2011, everyone in Ireland (policy makers, service providers, employers, the media, community groups, women, men ...) is being asked to think about men's health needs and to find ways to address them.

Hard copies of the A₃ size Men's Health Week posters are available from:

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Electronic versions of the poster (and further information about MHW 2011) can be downloaded from the MHFI website at: www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2011.html

ENDS - followed by Editor's Notes

Editor's Notes:

- ❑ International Men's Health Week (MHW) always begins on the Monday before Father's Day and ends on Father's Day itself. This year it will run from Monday 13th until Sunday 19th June 2011. It is celebrated in most European countries, as well as in the USA, Australia and a number of other places worldwide. See www.mhfi.org/international-mens-health-week.html for more details on MHW 2011 and activity which took place during previous years.
- ❑ The Men's Health Forum in Ireland (MHFI) is a charity which works on an all-Ireland 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.
- ❑ MHFI coordinates and promotes MHW activity on the island of Ireland, and cooperates with other Men's Health Fora across Europe to mark this week.
- ❑ The overall aims of MHW 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.
- ❑ MHFI recognises that there are a lot of organisations and groups throughout Ireland who can contribute to the health and well-being of men and boys. This work is not solely applicable only to those who work directly in the health field. To further the aims of MHW 2011, MHFI convened an all-island Planning and Advisory Group. Individuals from a broad range of organisations (see www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-2011.html#Planning) inputted to the planning process.
- ❑ During MHW 2011, a range of activities and events will take place throughout Ireland. These will be organised by locally-based groups. Details of some of these will be available on the MHFI website (www.mhfi.org) and promoted via Facebook at: www.facebook.com/MensHealthWeek
- ❑ A JPEG version of the MHW 2011 poster is attached to this Press Release. Further electronic copies of the poster - and the MHW logo - can be downloaded at: www.mhfi.org/mens-health-week-image-pack.html
- ❑ Further information can be obtained at www.mhfi.org or by contacting ...

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These contacts will take calls from anywhere in Ireland about Men's Health Week 2011.