

**URBAN HEALTH** ADVERTORIAL

# Helping Men Take Better Care of Their Health

**A**s I looked around the table during dinner last Thanksgiving, I took a deep breath and made a silent commitment to speak with each and every one of the men in my family about the importance of regular physical examinations. I knew, without asking, that none of the men in my family who were over 55 years old had ever had a prostate examination. I knew, without asking, that the only time the men in my family who are under 55 years old had ever visited a doctor was because they were in severe pain.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, women are 33 percent more likely than men to visit a doctor in general, although the gap narrows with increasing age.

I also know that the men in my family are not different than men in your family, who are not different than the men in our community, who are not different than men the world over. When men don't visit the doctor, they are just being a guy. It is part of the guy code to be tough and ignore pain. But as we get older, the rules have to change. A little pain will get worse and is a clear signal that something else more serious is going on in the body.

We also know that we can decrease the impact of many chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol, if we catch them early and treat them early.

Men die at higher rates than women from diseases and disability, and men also die younger than women. This is directly related to not being connected to a primary care physician (PCP) who can screen for major health problems. The biggest problem men face is not so much a specific disease, but a lack of health-care monitoring earlier in life.

This is not just true in the United States. During medical missions to the Caribbean and Africa, I have witnessed the same reluctance on the part of men to visit a doctor. It is the women and children who come to seek health care, not the men. It seems the guy code



is a universal phenomenon, even when it comes to sexually transmitted infections.

To bring much needed attention to the issues around Men's Health, Harlem Hospital Center is pleased to

collaborate with The Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce, The City College of New York, New York Academy of Medicine, Emblem Health and Touro College of osteopathic Medicine to host a session of the Second Annual National Urban Health Conference. The Conference will be held over the course of three days, Thursday, February 23 through Sunday, February 26. The session on Men's Health will be held at Harlem Hospital Center on Friday, February 24, 2012 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The theme of the session at Harlem Hospital Center will be health related environmental issues with a focus on men's health. We will look at the 3E's: the ecology, the environment, the economy and how they affect men's health. The conference will include a panel of health care experts who will discuss obesity and cardiovascular health with a focus on men. Air pollution, access to unhealthy foods and sedentary lifestyles also impact men's health and will be explored during the Conference.

Throughout the conference we will also help men understand how smart lifestyle choices such as maintaining a good diet, regular exercise, safe sex and getting regular medical check-ups and screening tests can dramatically influence their health.

We invite you to join us for the Second Annual National Urban Health Conference to help us raise awareness of men's health issues, change the face of men's health in our community and give men the opportunity and confidence to talk about their health more openly. The conference will also encourage our men to seek health care and increase early detection, diagnosis and effective treatment.

Regardless of age, we want to help our men stay on top of their game.

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Executive Director

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