



## House of Assembly

Extract from Hansard

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012  
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### International Men's Health Week

Mr PICCOLO (Light) (15:42): Today I would like to talk about International Men's Health Week. This week is International Men's Health Week, which is a time to reflect on the health of our fathers, sons, brothers, partners and friends in our community. I am happy to say that, leading up to this week, and also this week, my office has joined a number of people in the local community promoting men's health week, which is an opportunity to put the spotlight on men's health and encourage men to think more about their own health and wellbeing.

Men's health is a vitally important issue which often is not considered when we talk about health generally. The reality is that when we have men who are emotionally and physically healthy we have emotionally and physically healthy families because, in my view (and, I think, that of most

people), men are an integral part of our families.

During this week there will be promotions about healthy living, healthy eating and healthy lifestyle activities, and we will be encouraging men to talk to their health practitioners if they have any concerns. It is important that we get rid of the stigma surrounding men's health and break down the barriers to men from living healthy lives and also dealing with any health issues. As I said, men are brothers, fathers, partners and sons, so when they are not well it impacts on the people around them and, most importantly, their families.

Men's health is part of the core services provided to all South Australians by the state government. As the minister mentioned in answer to a question yesterday, there is an additional \$230,000 per annum specifically committed for research projects pertaining to men's health. Also, at this point I acknowledge the contribution made by the Freemasons in this state to the Centre for Men's Health at the University of Adelaide. The Freemasons have put in a lot of money to support research into men's health across the state.

I would like to also draw the attention of the house to some people who have been supporting the men's health promotion in my electorate, particularly in the Town of Gawler. We have the Willo's Men's Shed. It is based at Willaston, therefore, it is called the Willo's Men's Shed, and they provide a whole range of programs for men to socialise and do other things but, also, to talk about men's things.

I also thank Carol Dowden from the Fitness Studio, the STARplex Fitness Studio, F!t F!x, Dr Hyde and Partners, Coles supermarkets, the local Drakes Foodland Supermarket, the local Freemasons and also the Herbal Apothecary Healthshop, all of whom have made a contribution to promoting men's health in the community. In particular, I would like to acknowledge that Dr Hyde and Partners have provided free men's health checks this week as part of its service in encouraging men to do the right thing. I can also announce that Dr Hyde and Partners are also going to extend that program around Father's Day to encourage families to encourage their fathers to do the right thing and to get their health checked. I should also indicate for the record that Hyde and Partners is the practice that I go to for my own health care.

The other thing I would like also to mention very briefly in the time that I have available is some research which was undertaken by the Inspire Foundation and Ernst & Young and which was published recently. It is a study of the impact of young men's mental health on the Australian economy. In addition to the huge personal tragedy to families when things go wrong, there is also a huge cost to the community from poor mental health amongst our young men.

In fact, the study actually showed that mental illness in young men aged between 12 and 25 cost the Australian economy approximately \$3.27 billion per annum in terms of lost productivity. Not only is it a huge personal cost to families and the

individuals involved but it is also a huge cost to our society. The other study I would like to mention (which is actually published in the *New Male Studies Journal* by the Australian Institute of Male Health and Studies) particularly looks at the health of men in rural areas and particularly farm workers.

One interesting thing about this study was that, while they found a lot of the indicators for men's health were poorer in rural areas, they also found that, with interventions, they were actually getting improvements in all indicators. What one needs to conclude from this study is that, with appropriate –

Members interjecting:

The ACTING SPEAKER (Hon. M.J. Wright): Order!

Mr PICCOLO: – interventions we can get men, particularly in rural areas, to improve their health outcomes.

**TIME EXPIRED**