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AHRQ and Ad Council Encourage Men To Take Preventive Steps in Their Health Care

New Research Finds Men are 24 Percent Less Likely than Women to have Visited their Doctor; Public Service Ads Launch as part of Men's Health Week

Press Release Date: June 15, 2010

Men are 24 percent less likely than women to have visited the doctor within the past year, according to new data released today by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ). In addition, men are about 30 percent more likely than women to be hospitalized for preventable conditions such as congestive heart failure and complications from diabetes, according to new AHRQ data.

In an effort to raise awareness among middle-aged men about the importance of preventive medical testing, AHRQ joined with the Ad Council today to launch a new series of public service advertisements (PSAs) in conjunction with Men's Health Week (June 13-19) and prior to Father's Day (June 20).

As an extension of a Men's Preventive Health campaign first launched in 2008, AHRQ and the Ad Council released new PSAs to encourage men over 40 to learn which preventive screening tests they need to get and when they need to get them. This campaign complements AHRQ's existing efforts toward improving the safety and quality of health care and promoting patient involvement in their own health care, including the "Questions are the Answer" campaign launched with the Ad Council in 2007 and the "Superheroes" Spanish-language campaign launched in 2008.

"Our new data indicate that men aren't visiting their physicians as often as they probably should," said AHRQ Director Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D., who is a general internist. "We hope these new ads will motivate men to visit their physicians and learn about which preventive medical tests they need and when they need to get them."

Campaign spokesperson Mehmet Oz, M.D., a heart surgeon who hosts the syndicated series, The Dr. Oz Show, noted that he sees many of his patients for the first time after they've had a heart attack. "Men have delusions of adequacy when it comes to monitoring their bodies and need to be more conscious of healthy living and knowing their numbers," said Dr. Oz. "Part of our responsibility as fathers and husbands is keeping ourselves healthy, and it should be a family effort to gently nudge all men to map out steps to do the right thing."

The Men's Preventive Health campaign highlights the work of the AHRQ-sponsored U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel of experts in primary care and prevention that systematically reviews the evidence of effectiveness and develops recommendations for appropriate clinical preventive services screenings based on patient risk factors.

The data from the AHRQ Medical Expenditure Panel Survey released today also show that men are 22 percent more likely than women to have neglected their cholesterol tests.

Created pro bono for the Ad Council by Grey New York, the new television, radio, print, outdoor and Web ads incorporate family as a key motivating factor for men to take a more active role in preventive health. They show the target audience that they need to take care of themselves (and their health) in order to be there for their families now and in the future. To view the PSAs, visit <http://www.ahrq.gov/healthymen>.

"We know from our research that being there for your family is one of the strongest motivating factors for men when it comes to preventive medical testing," said Peggy Conlon, President & CEO of the Ad Council. "We are proud to continue working with AHRQ to raise awareness of these critical messages."

The PSAs encourage men to visit a comprehensive website, <http://www.ahrq.gov/healthymen>, which provides the recommended ages for preventive testing (as well as a list of tests), a quiz designed to test your knowledge of preventive health care, tips for talking with


your doctor, a glossary of consumer health terms, and links to online resources where you can find more medical information.

Public service advertisements are being distributed to approximately 33,000 media stations nationwide this week. Per the Ad Council's donated media model, all of the new public service advertisements will air and run in advertising time and space donated by the media. To date, the campaign has received more than \$35 million in donated time and space.

AHRQ

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (<http://www.ahrq.gov>) is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. AHRQ's mission is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. AHRQ's research helps people make more informed decisions and improve the quality of health care services.

The Advertising Council

The Ad Council (<http://www.adcouncil.org> <http://www.twitter.com/ahrqnews/> ) is a private, non-profit organization that marshals talent from the advertising and communications industries, the facilities of the media, and the resources of the business and non-profit communities to produce, distribute and promote public service campaigns on behalf of non-profit organizations and government agencies. The Ad Council addresses issue areas such as improving the quality of life for children, preventive health, education, community well-being, environmental preservation and strengthening families.

For more information, please contact AHRQ Public Affairs: (301) 427-1855.