

11TH ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL HEALTH SCREENINGS

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to bring to the Chamber's attention the 11th Annual Congressional Health Screenings and I would like to commend my colleague, Senator SHELBY, for his leadership at this event. The Congressional Health Screenings occur each year during National Men's Health Week the week prior to Father's Day. I encourage all of my colleagues and their staffs to participate in these screenings. As U.S. Senators, we must set an example and not only encourage healthy habits but practice them as well. This year's program offers a number of convenient screenings, including prostate specific antigen, PSA, cholesterol, glucose, blood pressure, and body fat tests, as well as health education materials. The purpose of this event is to increase our awareness of health issues and to help develop comprehensive strategies to improve our health and that of our families.

The state of men's health has become a national crisis. Because of poor health habits, lack of health insurance, failure to seek timely medical attention, and dangerous occupations, men are afflicted with more maladies and die younger than women. Today, men are living approximately 5 fewer years than that of their female counterparts and are dying at higher rates for 9 out of the Nation's top 10 causes of death. This includes death from cancer, diabetes, suicide, accidents, and diseases of the heart, kidney, and liver. When speaking about cancer, it is important to note that one in two men in his lifetime will be diagnosed with cancer and one in six will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

The Men's Health Network, along with Women Against Prostate Cancer, use National Men's Health Week to emphasize the fact that prostate health issues and prostate cancer is not merely a "man's disease." Each year thousands of wives, daughters, sisters, and friends are impacted—often in devastating ways—by the loss and/or suffering of a man from prostate health issues. Early and regular screenings significantly increase the chance of early detection and successful treatment.

I am pleased to report that we are steadily making progress. Last year during September's Prostate Awareness Month, Men's Health Network and the Washington Redskins held a prostate

screening at FedEx Field in Landover, MD. Over 300 people gathered to help their fathers, grandfathers, sons, uncles, and friends move one step closer toward a happier, healthier future. Five of the gentlemen screened had potentially dangerous PSA readings.

There is no better time than now to become more proactive with regard to men's health. Women are 100-percent more likely than men to regularly visit their doctors for annual examinations and to seek out preventative services. Half of the Nation's elderly widows living in poverty did not face economic hardships before the deaths of their husbands. Men between the ages of 45 and 54 are three times more likely to die of heart attacks, 1.5 times more likely to die from heart disease, and 1.5 times more likely to die from cancer than women.

Half of the estimated 54,000 men diagnosed this year with colon cancer will die from it. Over 185,000 men are expected to develop prostate cancer in 2008—almost 15 percent of these cases are expected to be terminal. Preventive measures, such as prostate specific antigen exams, blood pressure and cholesterol screens, and routine self-testing exams for these and other types of cancers that target men can lead to invaluable early detection that will increase the survival rates for such cancers by almost 100 percent.

In addition, I must reiterate the need for an Office of Men's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to tackle many of these aforementioned issues. Last year, I introduced S. 640, the Men's Health Act, which would establish such an office. The Office on Women's Health in the department does a fantastic job of saving the lives of thousands of women and improving the lives of many more. Similarly, an Office of Men's Health would provide a support network that would reach out to all men on issues related to men's health.

In closing, I thank the Men's Health Network for hosting the 11th Annual Congressional Health Screenings. I hope that my colleagues and their staffs will take this unique opportunity to not only better their own health, but to encourage the people around them to do the same.

