

E1210 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD —*Extensions of Remarks* June 11, 2003

RECOGNIZING MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM
OF CALIFORNIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2003

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, on May 10, 1972 I flew my 300th mission over North Vietnam. I shot down three MIGs that day to become the first Ace of the Vietnam War. Shortly after my third kill, I was hit by enemy fire and forced to eject along with my backseat, Willie Driscoll. As we parachuted down into enemy territory, I did not know whether I was going to live, die, or possibly be taken as a prisoner of war. It was indeed the scariest moment in my life--until the day my doctor looked me in the eye and told me that I had cancer.

I am one of thousands of men who was diagnosed following a simple prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test. During my annual examination in the summer of 1998, my doctor noted a slight elevation in my PSA test. He followed up with a sonogram and an MRI, neither of which revealed the disease. It was only after a prostate biopsy that it was determined that I had cancer. Following the diagnosis, in consultation with my family, I decided to pursue surgery as my treatment option. I am fortunate--early detection saved my life. My doctor was familiar with PSA results, and I had healthcare coverage for my treatments. Early detection and treatment meant the difference between life and death.

This year, 198,100 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and 31,500 will die from this terrible disease. But prostate cancer is only a small component of the men's health crisis: Men have a higher death rate than women do for every single one of the ten leading causes of death in this country. We're twice as likely to die of heart disease--the number one killer--and 40 percent more likely to die of cancer. Life expectancy has been longer for women than for men for several decades. Sadly, the largest part of the problem is that men do not take particularly good care of themselves. Only one-half of all men have received preventative health care services in the past year.

I am proud to work with the **Men's Health Network** to raise awareness regarding the need for regular health screenings, and it is an honor for me to host the annual men's health screenings on Capitol Hill. I urge my colleagues to visit the screenings, and to help me raise awareness about the fact that screenings like these can save lives.