



Healthier Illawarra Men (HIM)
PO Box 631
Wollongong NSW 2520
Ph: 02 – 4221 1300

Embargoed until 11am: Friday 13 August 2010

INDUSTRIES WEIGH IN ON MEN'S HEALTH

Five representatives from five key industry unions - Maritime Union of Australia, NSW Fire Brigade Employees Union, South Coast Labour Council, Australian Worker's Union and United Mine Workers – met today to unite and ask Illawarra men to listen up to five health tips and rally support for ahm Check It.

ahm Check It, the health screening event for Illawarra men, will be held on Friday 20 August 2010 at the WIN Entertainment Centre. Illawarra men will be able to undertake a variety of screenings and other assessments for conditions such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes and some cancers, and seek advice and information on depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and drug dependency and so on.

ahm Health Insurance, the Principal Sponsor of the event, have provided five tips to set men on the road to better health. They are:

1. Alcohol - Easy ways to prevent a quiet drink turning into binge...

- Learn to say thanks, but no thanks
- Try low alcohol alternatives
- Count your drinks and don't top up
- Drink slowly; sip instead of gulping
- Alternate with non alcoholic drinks

To help avoid the damaging effects of regular drinking, try to have at least two alcohol-free days a week and limit daily intake to two standard drinks.

2. Heart Disease - Reduce your risk

There are many healthy choices you can make to reduce your risk of heart disease, you can start by attending ahm Check It for a quick assessment and record your numbers -Body Mass Index, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels. Most importantly, be active every day - regular, moderate physical activity is good for the heart. The Heart Foundation recommends you include at least 30 minutes or more on most or all days of the week.

Source: Heart Foundation of Australia

3. Diet - Like father, like child

Obese children are more likely to have an inactive father or male guardian than non-obese children.

It's important for fathers to find ways to be more physically active with their children, especially if they are obese. This can include bush walking, swimming, Frisbee, playing different sports, and taking pets for walks.

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4. Testicular Check

Cancer of the testicles is one of the most common cancers affecting young men under 40. Most cases show up as a hard, painless, pea sized lump in one of the testicles.

All men over 20 should make a monthly habit of gently examining their testicles, and reporting any abnormalities, lumps or swellings to their doctor.

Source: *Andrology Australia 2005*

5. It's time to quit smoking

Quitline recommends using "The 4Ds" to curb cravings:

- Delay acting on your urge to smoke – the feeling will pass;
- Deep breathe to help yourself relax;
- Drink water, sipping slowly;
- Distract yourself.

According to the Cancer Council, the health benefits of quitting start within 2 hours of your last cigarette.

Arthur Rorris of the South Coast Labour Council said having industry backing was crucial to getting men along not only to the event, but to sit up and pay attention.

"Men's health is not just about the bloke. The guys out there working hard in the mines, in the factories, and in emergency services often put their lives on the line; the reality is there is often a family they are supporting so it's really important that men look after themselves, so that they can continue to look after their families. We're so pleased to be here with other union representatives and call on all Illawarra men to get to ahm Check it!"

For media enquiries, please contact:

Suzana De Ornelas - Waples Marketing Group
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ABOUT HEALTHIER ILLAWARRA MEN (HIM)

A committee has recently been formed locally called Healthier Illawarra Men (HIM) that includes, business and community leaders, leading Illawarra medical practitioners and university representatives.

The committee members are:

- Mark McDonald, Maguire & McInerney
- Stuart Barmes, WIN Sports & Entertainment Centres
- Nick, Hartgerink Hartgerink Media Services
- Arthur Rorris, South Coast Labour Council
- Andrew Dalley, Illawarra Division of General Practice
- Tim Lewis, Kollaras Trading Company
- Walter Immoos, Novotel Wollongong Northbeach
- Graeme Gulloch, Waples Marketing Group
- Bob Elvy, Cleary Bros
- Prof John Hogg, IOH - Injury & Occupational Health
- Greg Binskin, Tourism Wollongong
- Patrick Nolan, Telstra Country Wide
- Warwick Shanks, KPMG
- Terry Wetherall, JBA Planning
- Vicki Tiegs, Waples Marketing Group
- Kylie-ann Haynes, Bluejuice Events
- Suzana De Ornelas, Waples Marketing Group
- Craig Peden, University of Wollongong
- Dr Hunter Watt, South Coast Urology
- Kay Kent, University of Wollongong
- Dr Kellie Marshall, Illawarra Division of General Practice
- Prof Don Iverson, Illawarra Health & Medical Research Institute, University of Wollongong
- Katrina James, BlueScope Steel
- Michael Eggers, Novotel Wollongong Northbeach
- Madeline Ryan, Waples Marketing Group
- Moyra Lewis, University of Wollongong
- Ben Marsh, Illawarra Mercury
- Annie McDonald, ahm Health Insurance

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ABOUT CHECK IT

HIM, with support from the Illawarra Division of General Practice (IDGP), and partnership from ahm Health Insurance, is organising a free men’s health screening event, called ‘**CHECK IT**’ at the WIN Entertainment Centre (WEC) on Friday, 20 August 2010, during Men’s Health Week. Illawarra men of all ages are invited to come to the WEC on that day between 10am and 6pm, where they will be able to undertake a variety of screenings, blood tests and other assessments for conditions such as hypertension, obesity, diabetes and some cancers, and seek advice and information on depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and drug dependency and so on.

The event hopes to attract over 1,000 men on the day, setting them on the road to better health. ‘Check It’ will be staffed by IDGP volunteers as well as other specialists and health professionals, assisted by medical, nursing and health and behavioural science students from the University of Wollongong. Part of the day will include guest speakers (Wayne Gardner, Dragons, Hawks, Susie Burrell etc) to talk on their experiences. Additionally, a Mens Health Expo will be on display for all the men in attendance.

For registration information visit www.checkit.org.au

ABOUT ahm HEALTH INSURANCE

ahm’s been part of the Illawarra community since 1971. Starting life as a small, local health fund, ahm is now a national health insurer with 163,000 members and prides itself on providing friendly, personal service and great value. ahm’s head office is based in Wollongong and we have over 570 staff across our Wollongong office and three Dental and Eyecare Practices in NSW.

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