



Commemorate Men's Health Month by Encouraging *Him* to See a Doctor or Mental Health Provider

It's no secret that men see doctors less frequently than women. It's not because they are healthier than women as on average, men die about seven years before women. According to industry reports, men usually don't think about seeing a doctor before age 40 unless they have to. Even after 40, a large number of men avoid routine check-ups.

Why men don't go

Esquire Magazine published a survey in April of this year that revealed:

- 37% percent of men have seen a doctor in the last year
- Another third have not visited a doctor in the last year
- 10% can't remember when they last saw a doctor
- 45% don't have a primary care physician (compared to 20% of women)
- 20% of men in their 40's have not had preventative tests including prostate exams, or blood tests, colonoscopy, diabetes screening and cholesterol measurements

The survey drew three conclusions for why men don't see doctors: faulty support; a reluctance or refusal to talk to peers about health problems; and a discomfort with discussing personal problems—hoping that the physician will initiate the topic first (this is right from practicing physicians' mouths).

Typically, men seek help when a major health problem arises. Men's Health Month, which occurs every year in June, is intended to heighten awareness about preventable health care problems. Additionally, it is an annual reminder to encourage male family members, friends and colleagues to get checked out by a doctor. Must-do screenings include blood, blood pressure, colon and prostate.

Confronting the elephant

It's also a good time to broach perhaps an even more sensitive issue, encouraging men who suffer with bouts of depression and other behavioral health challenges to seek help.

“Not too long ago clinical depression was deemed a “women’s disease,” said Gloria Miller, Vice President of Community Services. “Today, we know that 6 million men suffer from depression every year. Unfortunately, the perception that depression is a women’s issue keeps many men from seeking the help they need.”

Miller also said that depression in men is not always recognized. One factor is that men tend to deny that anything is wrong. Additionally, American culture suggests that expressing emotion is largely a female attribute.

“Men are less likely to show signs that are often attributed to depression like sadness,” Miller said. “Instead, they may become more remote to keep their feelings hidden. Or quite the opposite, they may show more irritable or aggressive tendencies.”

According to the CDC, men in the U.S. are about four times more likely than women to commit suicide—75% to 80% of all people who commit suicide in the U.S. are men. More women attempt suicide, however more men are more successful at ending their lives.

Tips to help him deal with depression

- Understand that depression is an underlying symptom of a larger problem. Open the lines of communication and encourage him to discuss the problem.
- Schedule an appointment for him to see a doctor or mental health provider. Offer to go with him and even jot down a few questions to discuss with the provider.
- Leverage online resources to learn all you can about depression. The more you know the better support you can provide.
- Plan an intervention. If his depression worsens, it is imperative to seek help even without his permission.

In commemoration of Men’s Health Month, encourage him to seek the help he needs whether emotional or physiological. Call Pathways at **660.885.8131** or visit *PathwaysOnline.org* for a location near you. Pathways’ crisis hotlines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **1-888-279-8188** (Johnson, Cass & Lafayette counties) or **1-800-833-3915** (Bates, Benton, Camden, Cedar, Cole, Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Henry, Hickory, Maries, Miller, Laclede, Osage, Pulaski, Phelps, St. Clair and Vernon counties).

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About Us

Midwest Behavioral Healthcare Management, Inc. is the parent company of Pathways Community Behavioral Healthcare, Inc., and Royal Oaks Hospital, located in Windsor, MO. Together, the non-profit

community behavioral healthcare center with 32 offices throughout 36 counties in Missouri and the 41-bed behavioral health hospital, provide a full continuum of evidence-based behavioral health services for children, adolescents and adults. Services include comprehensive psychiatric treatment, addiction recovery, and crisis & prevention services. Pathways has been providing behavioral health services for over 30 years. For the Children Foundation, the primary funding-raising arm of Midwest Behavioral Healthcare Management, Inc., raises money for children who suffer with behavioral issues but have no way to pay for treatment. Funds raised by the Foundation help children receive needed services at Pathways and Royal Oaks.