

A TOOLKIT TO HELP LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS INCREASE OUTREACH TO MALES

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Executive Summary

Males are dying, on average, six years earlier than their female counterparts. It is time for males to take charge of their health. “Widow Busters”, a KPHLI team, has undertaken the task of promoting male health to the general public and local public health departments.

According to a CDC report, women's life expectancy rose from 79.7 to 79.8 years, while men rose from 74.3 to 74.4 years. White women have the highest life expectancy, 80.2 years; followed by black women (75.5 years), white men (75 years) and black men (68.6 years). "Men in all socioeconomic levels are doing poorly in terms of health," writes David R. Williams, PhD, MPH, with the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Males have higher death rates than women for 15 leading causes of death except Alzheimer's disease. Male's death rates are at least twice as high for accidents, murder, suicide, and liver disorders. Males are slightly more likely to get high blood pressure or cancer, and twice as likely to consume more than five alcoholic drinks a day. Males are more likely than women to be imprisoned, homeless, or to use illegal drugs. Minority males are more likely to live in poverty. While 17% of white males are uninsured, 28% of black males and almost half of Hispanic males have no insurance. Also, females are twice as likely as males to visit a doctor each year. When males do see a doctor, the visits are shorter and are less likely to include advice on lifestyle changes that promote better health.

Work environment also takes its toll; males tend to work in more dangerous jobs than women, and males represent 90% of job fatalities. Stressors and negative emotional states created by poor working conditions can lead to poor sleeping patterns, decreased physical activity, substance abuse, and overeating, all of which negatively impact male's health.

In our culture, males are expected to be strong and silent, especially when it comes to their health. This leads to apathy among males and healthcare providers regarding male health. In order to change attitudes concerning male health our KPHLI team developed a package for distribution to the general public and public health departments.

The package includes a 60 second Public Service Announcement (PSA) video for distribution to local television stations, a 15 second and a 30 second audio PSA for distribution to local radio stations and a printed press release for local newspapers. Also included in the package is a CD containing a PowerPoint presentation, a local health department (LHD) self-assessment tool, and a brochure of recommended male health screenings. This package will be distributed to all local health departments in the Commonwealth for use in their promotion of male health. The “Widow Busters” team will perform additional distribution of video and audio materials across the Commonwealth.

Currently one-half of the population of the United States is underserved in healthcare; the goal of this project is to begin the process of alleviating this inequity, through promotion increased awareness of male health in the general population.

Introduction/Background

Men are dying on average 6 years earlier than women and leaving their loved ones behind. Public Health has a unique opportunity to improve outreach to the male population, increase awareness of men's high risk behaviors and educate males on how to reduce those risks.

The majority of public health services historically have targeted women and children, and men have been the forgotten segment of the population. Providing Local Health Departments the tools to promote healthy behaviors and educating the public about men's health needs are the main objectives of this project.

Project Description

Our project produced an audio, newspaper, and video PSA, a standardized press release, written materials for local Health Departments to self-assess whether their Health Department is providing services to meet men's needs, tips on increasing public health outreach to males and educational materials targeted to the male population.

Objectives

- 1) Increase awareness of the disparities between the male and female life span.
- 2) Increase awareness of male high risk behaviors.
- 3) Promote men's health awareness throughout the state by educating public health employees and the general population.
- 4) Local Health Departments to do an honest self-assessment of their provision of services to the males of their community.
- 5) Develop the tools for the implementation of increased outreach to males.

Methodology

Team members researched what male services were being provided in local health departments. We also looked at what barriers existed for males accessing public health and data supporting the disparities of life expectancy between males and females. Our research revealed that public health underserved males and outreach was inadequate.

Project development:

- Team members met and planned project.
- Contacts were made at the Department of Public Health as to their interest in the development of this project.
- Drafted radio and television PSA'S, power point, and educational materials for LHD's.
- Secured funding from all agencies represented.
- Met with radio and television producers.
- Radio PSA was produced in Somerset.
- Met to revise and approve copies of materials.

- Wrote drafts for project summary.
- Television PSA was produced in Louisville by GLTV.
- TV PSA was copied in the appropriate format and sent directly to all TV stations in Kentucky.
- Packaging materials ordered, CD'S burned, videos copied.
- Met to approve final copies of materials.
- Met to assemble tool kit and prepare for final presentation.

Essential Public Health Services

Our Widow Buster change master project encompasses all Essential Public Health Services (EPHS) except #6, enforcing laws and regulations.

EPHS #1 Monitor health status to identify community health problems. We found health disparities between males and females. Males live on average 6 fewer years than women.

EPHS #2 Diagnose and investigate health problems and health hazards in the community. The Widow Buster change master project has investigated and determined that a public health problem/hazard exists: the difference in longevity between males and females.

EPHS #3 Inform, educate and empower people about health issues. This is the main crux of our Widow Buster change master program, the health issue being that males are not accessing the health services available to them in order to increase the quality and longevity of their lives.

EPHS #4 Mobilize community partnerships to identify and solve health problems. While we are focusing on the actions that public health can take to improve men's health, we suggest to local health departments that they use community partnerships, i.e. the media, local Kiwanis, Jaycees clubs, etc., to address this community health problem.

EPHS #5 Develop policies and plans that support individual and community health efforts. Our change master project addresses helping public health to improve its outreach to men and improve individual and community education on men's health issues. Our product gives local health departments a plan that will assist them in offering better health education to men.

EPHS #7 Link people to needed personal health services and assure the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. We support the goal of linking people to needed services and assuring the provision of health care when otherwise unavailable. Our goal is that local health departments will do this very thing for men who inquire about or need services.

EPHS #8 Assure a competent public health care workforce. A major goal of our

project is to educate public health employees on the difference in longevity between males and females and to give health departments a plan for addressing the problem with individuals and their local communities.

EPHS #9 Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and population-based health services.

Our project supports this goal in that public health should use the information obtained by evaluation of health services, etc. to determine what changes need to be made to continually improve our outreach to men.

EPHS #10 Research for new insights and innovative solutions to health problems.

Team members researched for new insights and solutions to this health problem and the plan given to all local health departments includes some suggested solutions to the problem.

Results

The results of our project are in the form of a Toolkit that gives local health departments ammunition in the battle to increase the health status and lifespan of males. The Toolkit and details will be presented to the directors of all health departments in the state at an upcoming Kentucky Health Department Association meeting. A list of the Toolkit's contents follows:

- Cover letter
- List and description of items included in Toolkit
- Tip/Assessment sheet – Is your health department “Men-Friendly?”
- Recommended Screenings brochure
- PowerPoint presentation
- TV PSA – Can also be shown in your health department's waiting area
- Radio PSAs – Can also be used as part of an “on hold” phone message
- Newspaper press release
- Newspaper PSA
- List of suggested additions to your Men's Health web page including links

Another achievement was an increased awareness among our own project group members as well as, we hope, our fellow KPHLI scholars and public health employees across the state, of the health disparity that exists between males and females and what public health can and should do to solve this problem.

Conclusions

Our KPHLI team envisions increased awareness in the Local Health Departments and the general population of activities and practices that lead to improved quality of life for the male population. All Health Departments in the state will receive a “Men's Health Toolkit” containing information and materials that will assist them in immediately increasing their public health outreach to the males in their communities.

Leadership Development Opportunities

Christine Hanshaw

KPHLI has helped me to better understand the past, present and future of public health and to envision how public health works as a complete entity. I also appreciate the unique opportunity KPHLI offers to meet other public health workers from across the state and to hear how other health departments handle situations and solve problems. I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this worthwhile program. Thank you to our director and my supervisor for allowing me to participate in this program.

The Change Master Project is an important part of the KPHLI learning experience. The process of working on a Change Master Project proves to participants that all public health workers, from any discipline and whether a supervisor or not, can serve their health department in a leadership role and make a positive change. People from different disciplines can learn from each other and work together to put out a great product. I feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to work on a Change Master Project that I believe in and am proud of. Another thank you goes to the others in my Change Master group for their hard work and dedication to our mission of increasing awareness of men's health issues. You guys are the best!

Nazenin Assef

Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute has been a wonderful experience for me personally and professionally. I am grateful to all the individuals that provided me the opportunity to participate in such a high caliber program. The KPHLI learning environment has provided an excellent opportunity to enhance my leadership skills and public health knowledge. The best part of this institute for me was the networking with other public health professionals from all over the state and learning from their experiences. I will miss all the positive interactions and lively discussions provided at the summit and the master project team meetings.

Working on the Change Master Project was a rewarding and learning experience for me. I truly enjoyed being part of a fine group of dedicated public health professionals, who continued working diligently and always had a spirit of teamwork. The friendships and professional relationships that our master project group developed, will last a lifetime and we hope that our project will make a positive impact on the health of men in the state of Kentucky.

Melanie Napier

Attending KPHLI this past year has been an awesome experience. As a Community Health graduate it was rewarding to use my skills to help plan, develop, and implement a public health program. Men's Health is such a timely issue and I feel privileged to have worked on this project with the Widow Busters. This gift we are giving to Kentucky males and their families will have a lasting effect for generations to come.

I would like to thank each of the Widow Busters. I cannot say enough about the talent and knowledge this team brought to the table. It was a pleasure to work with each individual. I would like to add a special thanks to my supervisor Chris Barnett who had the insight as a leader to encourage my development and attendance at KPHLI and to Dennis Chaney, BRDHD director, who supported our efforts in addressing Men's Health.

M. Stuart Spillman

My experience over the past year in KPHLI has been very positive. I've learned a lot from the presenters and my teammates. This course has exposed me to a level of learning I would not have experienced without the support of the Lake Cumberland District Health Department and the other supporters of the Leadership Institute and I am thankful for this.

My teammates have been great to work with and it's hard to believe we put together a project like this in such a short time. This speaks volumes about their knowledge and talents. KPHLI's most valuable contribution to my development has been the opportunity to meet, work with, and forge a life-long friendship with these people. I sincerely hope this project will live on and that we have made a difference in some man's life.

Ronald Herald

This past year spent in the Kentucky Public Health Leadership Institute has been one of the most enjoyable and challenging of my life. Through the institute, I have developed contacts and friendships that will be of immense value in my public health career. I have found that small groups of people are able to take on a cause they believe in and bring it to the attention of public health officials. Through the efforts of our group, we were able to take the often-ignored issue of men's health and develop a variety of techniques to bring this topic to the fore.

Would I recommend KPHLI to other persons working in public health? The answer would be an emphatic "Yes". Our next generation of public health leaders needs the management and visioning training that this program provides.

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