



Sheila Dixon

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Mayor Dixon Announced Men's Health Awareness Initiative

Baltimore, MD (August 29, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon announced the 1st Annual Men's Blue Suit Health Awareness Weekend for September 14-16, 2007. This weekend will be the start of a year of collaborations between hospitals, health care providers and faith institutions in the region to advance men's health. Men will be encouraged to wear "blue suits" to show their support for the effort.

Life expectancy in Baltimore in 2005 was 67.3 years for men, compared to 75.7 years for women. Men are more likely than women to die of treatable and preventable causes including heart disease, diabetes, HIV, homicide, and accidents. Men in Baltimore are also less likely to have access to a doctor. There are approximately 170,000 men living in the city between the ages of 18 and 65. It is estimated that at least one-third of them, approximately 60,000, are uninsured.

"Our goal is to help men take charge of their health," said Mayor Dixon. "I am very grateful for the interest of so many health and faith institutions in our region to come together to save lives."

The "Blue Suit" effort was created by Marvin "Doc" Cheatham, who is leading a coordinating group consisting of numerous local organizations, hospitals, and churches.

"We're creating a coalition that will touch tens of thousands of men in our region," said Mr. Cheatham. "By raising awareness, encouraging healthy behaviors, and linking people to care, this effort will have a major impact."

To complement this community-based effort, the Baltimore City Health Department is releasing a six-point agenda on men's health: (1) Have a primary care doctor and known your numbers; (2) Know your HIV status; (3) Exercise and eat well; (4) Take steps to avoid violence; (5) Avoid tobacco; and (6) Know how to access treatment for addiction.

"There are resources in the city to help men take responsibility for their health," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. "We need to get the word out."

The Health Department will make available a resource card based on this agenda that includes information on age-appropriate screenings. For more information, please visit the Health Department's website at <http://www.baltimorehealth.org>.

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