

Date: 13 June 2013

Men's Health Week to focus on wellness, not illness

According to the Men's Health Information and Resource Centre at the University of Western Sydney (UWS), men suffer higher rates of illness and accidents than women and need more encouragement to access healthcare services in their local community.

This was the focus of National Men's Health Week (10-16 June), where health experts hoped to uncover a range of social factors that impact on men's ability to live quality lives and achieve their full potential.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) Director of Community Health, Justin Duggan, said that it is important to focus on wellness rather than illness when it comes to men's health.

"We know that social factors including employment, education, access to male-friendly services, positive role models and mutual respect can impact on the health and wellbeing of men in south-western Sydney," Mr Duggan said.

"Men's Health Week is an opportunity to encourage men and their families to take the time to actively plan for better health and get any concerns checked out by a local GP.

"This is particularly important for marginalised and disadvantaged communities such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men, unemployed men, separated men, new dads and other males who may find themselves at risk of increased stress and therefore poorer health outcomes," he said.

The UWS Men's Health Information and Resource Centre works closely with the Men's Health Advisory Group, made up of representatives of various local health services including Community Star / CHETRE, the HUB Community Health Centre in Miller and the 'Strong Fathers – Strong Families' program.

Strong Fathers – Strong Families helps Aboriginal men share their experiences and work through parenting challenges in weekly group sessions held at Hoxton Park Community Health, Fairfield Community Hub and a new program soon to be launched in the Campbelltown area.

For more information on resources and events that support men's health, visit www.menshealthweek.org.au.