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NEWS RELEASE - June Men's Health Week

Each June, the week before Father's Day is celebrated as "Men's Health Week."
In 2008, Men's Health Week will be observed from June 9 to 15.

The Otsego County Department of Health wants you to have the facts about men's health. "Many men continue to ignore their health. Poor health education and poor health behaviors in the lives of men continue to contribute to a growing crisis in men's health," said the Otsego County Department of Health.

Men often make their health a low priority. But many causes of illness are easily preventable. It's a fact that simple awareness of preventable health problems, and the early detection and treatment of disease, can make a profound difference in the quality of life. Early detection by such routine exams as prostate screenings, blood pressure checks, cholesterol testing, colorectal cancer screenings – even such simple tests as those for blood sugar and overweight – can play an important role in staying healthy..

Unfortunately, many men resist seeking routine medical check-ups. From childhood on, men are taught to minimize their health concerns. When a small boy skins his knee, he's often told 'big boys don't cry.' Later in life, when a man has chest pains, he's inclined to minimize it as 'just indigestion' because he's been taught his entire life to ignore or minimize the physical symptoms of his body. These attitudes need to change because early detection and treatment are the best ways to prevent health problems from becoming more serious.

Men are less likely than women to see a physician regularly, and are significantly more likely to be disconnected from the health-care system. They are often extremely reluctant to admit that there might be anything wrong until a problem is too severe to ignore.

This reluctance is a contributing factor in the growing health disparities between men and women. The difference in life expectancies between the genders is now more than five years.

Men have higher rates of heart disease and cancer, and higher rates of chronic problems such as high blood pressure and dangerously high cholesterol problems. These are problems that are often treatable if they are detected early. And, of course, there are problems such as prostate and testicular cancers that are unique to men. Men need to see their healthcare providers to assess their personal risks for various problems.

Men should take the occasion of "Men's Health Week" as a perfect opportunity to make an appointment with their doctor or other health care provider. A routine check-up can find a problem before it's serious and contribute to a longer life with a better quality of life.

For more information on Men's Health Week, call the Otsego County Department of Health at 607-547-4230, or visit the Men's Health Week web site at <http://www.menshealthweek.org>.