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Grey Power: backs prostate health campaign and calls for progress on screening pilot

Grey Power New Zealand is backing a nationwide campaign encouraging men to take a proactive approach to their prostate health, while calling for progress on a prostate cancer screening pilot supported by both major political parties.

The Prostate Cancer Foundation of New Zealand's *Just a Tick – It could save your life* campaign, supported by All Blacks coaching legend Sir Steve Hansen and comedian Te Radar, encourages men to ask their doctor about a prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood test.

Grey Power New Zealand President David Marshall says the campaign delivers a simple but important message, particularly for older men who may be inclined to put their health concerns aside.

"Too many men are reluctant to talk about their health or seek medical advice until something is wrong. This campaign is a timely reminder that taking a small step now could make a significant difference to their future health and quality of life.

"Prostate cancer is the most diagnosed cancer in men. It affects thousands of New Zealanders and their families every year. With around one in eight men expected to develop the disease during their lifetime, it is an issue that deserves greater awareness and open discussion."

Approximately 4,500 New Zealand men are diagnosed with prostate cancer each year, and about 700 die from the disease.

"Ageing well is about more than living longer. It is about maintaining our health, independence and quality of life for as long as possible. That means being proactive, knowing what health checks may be appropriate and having conversations with health professionals before problems become more serious.

"We encourage men in their forties and beyond to make prostate health part of their regular health discussions. If you are unsure whether a PSA test is right for you, talk to your doctor about the potential benefits, limitations and risks."

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A PSA blood test measures the level of prostate-specific antigen in the blood. An elevated result does not necessarily mean a man has prostate cancer, but it can indicate that further assessment may be warranted. The test cannot diagnose cancer on its own, and decisions about testing should be made in consultation with a health professional.

Marshall says the campaign also highlights the importance of men looking after themselves for the sake of the people who depend on them.

“Families, partners, children and grandchildren all want their loved ones to enjoy as many healthy years together as possible. Looking after your health is a practical step towards protecting that time together.

“Grey Power encourages men to take the message to heart: make the appointment, ask the question and have the conversation. Just a tick could be an important first step.”

Marshall says Grey Power also welcomes the commitments from National and Labour to support a prostate cancer screening pilot, following their leaders’ statements during the election campaign.

“Cross-party support for a pilot is an important step towards establishing whether a more systematic approach to early detection can improve outcomes for New Zealand men.

“But commitments need to translate into action. We want to see the pilot properly funded, designed around sound clinical evidence and implemented without unnecessary delay.

“A pilot should establish how screening can best identify cancers that need treatment, while minimising the risks of unnecessary investigations and treatment. Its findings should then inform decisions about whether a national screening programme is warranted.”

ENDS

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