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Professor Dame Sally Davies  
Department of Health  
79 Whitehall, Richmond House  
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## The opportunity for men's health

Dear Dame Sally,

On behalf of the Men's Health Forum, I was delighted to see that your recent annual report "The health of the 51%: Women" not only took a gendered approach to health - but also that it saw this in the widest possible terms - giving equal parity to mental and physical health - and seeing the need for wider societal engagement in improving health, especially in the workplace.

We would strongly welcome a similar report on men and boys' health next year.

We've tried to take a similarly wide-ranging approach in our 2014 Men's Health Manifesto (enclosed), which makes a series of recommendations to improve men's health - including:

- Highlighting the importance of tracking and reporting outcomes by gender
- Increased investment in health research into men's health issues, such as the excess burden of most common cancers amongst men
- A strong continued focus on prevention
- Removing the barriers to using health care, mental health and preventative care - especially for men (and women) in full-time work and self-employment
- Not waiting for men to engage in areas where late presentation or underuse of services is an issue - especially mental health
- Targeted programmes around the needs and attitudes of the highest risk men & boys
- Building health awareness and literacy, especially amongst boys
- Organisational focus on gender and inequalities across the whole health system

We've since been engaging with NHS England and Public Health England to see how we can further strengthen our manifesto. The next revision will include:

- More clarity on other areas where men face worse health such as occupational lung disease, COPD, renal failure and liver disease - as well as particular issues such as diabetic foot disease.
- More on the needs of those men who are particularly disadvantaged, such as disabled men

The Chief Medical Officer's Report has played a very important role in our organisation's history. Indeed, the chapter of Sir Kenneth Calman's report in 1992 that covered men's health was an important influencing factor in encouraging the Royal College of Nursing to set up the Men's Health Forum in the first place.

One area we were particularly pleased to see highlighted was obesity. As you know, in the UK, men are significantly more likely to be overweight than women (although less likely to know it) and slightly more likely to be obese. However, our recent survey of local authorities showed that, in authorities that record gendered figures, only 29,197 men received help from their local authority to

lose weight, compared to 110,324 women. In addition, men are also only 24% of those receiving in-patient bariatric surgery. We strongly support action to address this – including a gendered approach to designing weight management programmes and, for your interest, enclose a copy of our recent publication on the subject – *‘How to make weight loss services work for men’*.

We very much hope your annual report has the impact that it deserves this year – particularly in raising the relationship between gender and health. As mentioned above, we very much hope you will also consider addressing men’s health issues in your next annual report and making the case for some of the other much needed changes in the health system to improve the health of men and boys.

Please let us know if there is any way we can help with this.

Yours sincerely,

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