



STATE OF OHIO  
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**Good morning, Chair Schmidt, Vice Chair Deeter, Ranking Member Somani, and esteemed members of the House Health Committee,**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this important piece of legislation. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to my joint sponsor, Representative Lorenz, for partnering with me on this bill.

House Bill 207, which many of you may know as the Male Wellness Bill, is a piece of legislation that is deeply personal to me. My motivation for introducing this bill stems from my observations of the men in my community. Over time, I have noticed that many men, including those closest to me, are not consistently seeing their healthcare providers. Even when they do visit the doctor, they often struggle to fully comprehend the information being shared with them.

As my own father has aged, I've made it a priority to accompany him to medical appointments, ensuring he receives the care he needs and that we both fully understand his diagnoses and treatment plans.

The issue of male health is often overlooked in our society. There is a pervasive stigma surrounding the conversation of men's health, driven by the misguided belief that seeking medical care or even acknowledging health concerns is a sign of weakness or a lack of masculinity. This stigma must be broken. Regular visits to the doctor and dentist are essential components of good health, and we must foster an environment where seeking care is seen as a strength, not a vulnerability.

For many of Ohio's aging population, having a family member or advocate to help navigate the healthcare system, whether it's scheduling appointments or ensuring that they understand their doctors' instructions, can make all the difference in whether they receive the care they need.

This bill is designed not only to raise awareness about both the physical and mental health challenges facing men, but also to encourage family members to play a more active role in supporting the men in their lives when interacting with healthcare professionals. We must recognize that healthcare is a shared responsibility; we cannot do it alone.

Preventative care, particularly for issues like prostate exams and colonoscopies, saves lives. Early detection of conditions such as cancer can significantly increase the chances of successful treatment. Consider these sobering statistics:

- Between 2014 and 2018, the Ohio Department of Health reported that the incidence of colon and rectum cancer among men in Ohio was 46.9 per 100,000, compared to 36.6 per 100,000 among women.
- The mortality rate was 17.9 per 100,000 for men, compared to 12.9 per 100,000 for women.
- The CDC reports that men have a suicide rate that is four times higher than that of women, accounting for 80% of all suicides.

These statistics underscore the critical need for greater awareness and action surrounding male health in our communities.

<sup>1</sup> Colon and Rectum Cancer in Ohio 2021

<sup>2</sup> 2023 Ohio Suicide Report

<sup>3</sup> Suicide Data and Statistics: <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/data.html>  
rates.html

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House Bill 207 aims to address these disparities by designating June as **“Male Wellness Month,”** a time to promote important health screenings like prostate exams, colonoscopies, and mental health screenings. Additionally, the bill establishes the third Monday of June as **“Take Your Dad to the Doctor and Dentist Day,”** or **“DAD Day,”** which will be officially recognized and promoted by the Ohio Department of Health. These initiatives will provide an opportunity to raise awareness and create a culture of proactive health care among men across urban, rural, and suburban communities alike.

I respectfully ask for your support in advancing this critical legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.