



Colorado Department
of Public Health
and Environment

NEWS RELEASE

Office of Communications
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

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Man Therapy offers innovative approach to men's mental health
Campaign uses humor to help men tackle depression, divorce and suicidal thoughts

DENVER – The Office of Suicide Prevention at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment today launched Man Therapy, a groundbreaking approach to suicide prevention and other men's mental health issues. The office and its partners, Denver-based advertising agency Cactus and the Carson J Spencer Foundation, launched the campaign designed to use humor to cut through stigma and help men tackle issues such as depression, divorce and suicidal thoughts head-on, the way a man would do it.

"Colorado currently has the sixth-highest suicide rate in the nation," said Jarrod Hindman, director of Colorado's Office of Suicide Prevention. "Men between the ages of 25 and 54 make up a significant portion of suicide deaths in the state, and the numbers are on the rise. It's clear we have to do something to target this difficult-to-reach audience."

Hindman said Man Therapy provides men approaching crisis, and their loved ones, a place to go to learn more about men's mental health, examine their own and consider a wide array of actions that will put them on the path to treatment and recovery. Its message is that men should treat mental health issues "like they would a broken leg" and strive to get better.

"Man Therapy features our hero, the good Dr. Rich Mahogany. He's a man's man who is dedicated to cutting through the denial with a fresh approach using his rapier wit, odd sense of humor and practical advice for men," said Joe Conrad, Cactus founder and strategic director. "There exists an age-old stigma that mental health disorders are unmanly signs of weakness. And our main character and hero, Dr. Rich Mahogany, is dedicated to smashing that."

The centerpiece of the campaign is mantheraphy.org, where men and their loved ones can go for a virtual appointment with Dr. Mahogany. Visitors can navigate through Dr. Mahogany's office to can find information about men's mental health, including a guy's guide to Gentlemen's Health™, a mental health evaluation quiz, do-it-yourself tips, therapy referral sources, a crisis line and links to local support groups and organizations.

"Man Therapy reaches men where they live," said Chris Lindley, director of the health department's Prevention Services Division. "It disarms them with humor and gives them the tools they need to confront their problems head-on. This approach could really work for Colorado men."

The integrated communications campaign includes a 30-second TV public service announcement, videos, social media outreach, outdoor boards and outreach materials (posters, coasters and Dr. Mahogany's business card) for partners throughout Colorado.

Initial funding for the project was provided through a grant from The Anschutz Foundation to help develop the campaign. Promotional partners include Kroenke Sports Charities and its teams including the Colorado Avalanche, Denver Nuggets, Colorado Rapids and Colorado Mammoth. Media promotional partners include Altitude Sports and Entertainment, Comcast and Charter Media.

"This campaign goes beyond just awareness to really engage men and draw them into the conversation," said Sally Spencer Thomas, director of the Carson J. Spencer Foundation. "It teaches them about men's mental health and encourages them with options ranging from do-it-yourself techniques all the way to professional therapy and resources."

Campaign materials are available for download at www.mantherapy.org/mediakit . Interviews with Cactus Director Joe Conrad, Office of Suicide Prevention Director Jarrod Hindman, Carson J Spencer Foundation's Sally Spencer, as well as with men who have struggled with suicidal thoughts, are available on request.

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Colorado Office of Suicide Prevention - The Office of Suicide Prevention, a legislatively mandated entity of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, is charged with serving as the lead entity for statewide suicide prevention and intervention efforts, collaborating with Colorado communities to reduce the number of suicide deaths and attempts in the state. To learn more about the office, visit www.coosp.org.

Carson J Spencer Foundation - *The Carson J Spencer Foundation* is a Colorado-based 501(c)(3) organization that delivers innovative and effective suicide prevention programs for working-aged people, coaches young leaders to develop social enterprises for mental health promotion and suicide prevention, and supports people bereaved by suicide.

Cactus - Cactus is a full-service brand communications agency providing business solutions for companies and causes through brand strategy, advertising, design, and interactive and media services. Cactus has been nationally recognized for its breakthrough creative executions by The One Show, Communication Arts, The Webby Awards, South by Southwest, Favourite Website Awards, Advertising Age, and Creativity and Print's Regional Design Annual. To learn more about Cactus, visit <http://www.sharpideas.com>.