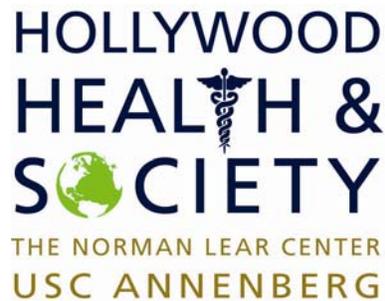


For Immediate Release

Contact:  
Kathy Le  
323-782-3322  
kathy.l@usc.edu



***Storylines Featuring Autism, Diabetes and Organ Donation  
Are Among Finalists for 2009 Sentinel for Health Awards***

Los Angeles, August 25, 2009 – Hollywood, Health & Society, a joint program of the Norman Lear Center at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), today announced 11 finalists for the Sentinel for Health Awards.

In its tenth year, the Sentinel for Health Awards recognizes exemplary achievements of television storylines that inform, educate and motivate viewers to make choices for healthier and safer lives. Six categories of storylines will be recognized – daytime drama, primetime drama, primetime comedy, primetime drama minor storyline, children’s programming and global health storyline.

The 11 finalists received the highest scores in a field of 30 eligible entries that were reviewed by topic experts at the CDC and partner organizations. Health topics addressed in the storylines include autism, alcohol abuse, childhood obesity, measles and vaccinations, organ donation, diabetes and HIV.

All finalists will be recognized in an awards ceremony followed by a panel discussion with the writers on Wednesday, September 23, 2009, at the Writers Guild of America, West, in Los Angeles.

"We're delighted to shine a spotlight on television writers and producers who both entertain viewers and at the same time provide them with accurate information," says Martin Kaplan, the Norman Lear Chair at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and director of the Lear Center. "Our hope is that the storylines we honor with this award will spur other TV writers to recognize and use responsibly the awesome power they wield."

Hollywood, Health & Society works with nationally recognized experts from government, academic and nonprofit organizations to consult with TV writers on health issues in storylines. More than 200 requests were received from daytime and primetime TV writers in the past year.

"Every day millions of viewers worldwide learn something new about health from TV

storylines and take action on what they've learned," says Sandra de Castro Buffington, director of the Hollywood, Health & Society program. "Viewers turn on their televisions to follow the stories that touch their hearts and minds, and strongly influence their choice making. Recognizing the profound impact of TV storylines on health knowledge, attitudes and behavior, we honor writers and producers who weave accurate health messages into their storytelling."

First-round judging for the Sentinel for Health Awards focused on accuracy of health depictions. Eighteen panels of topic experts participated in this activity at CDC and partner organizations. Entries were scored by the experts and those with the highest scores became finalists. The 11 finalists were then reviewed for entertainment value and potential benefit to the viewing audience by two panels of judges representing entertainment, news media, and academic and public health organizations.

The 2009 Sentinel for Health Awards finalists are:

#### Daytime Drama

- ***As the World Turns*** (CBS): "Carly's Alcohol Story" (Alcohol abuse)
- ***Days of our Lives*** (NBC): "Living with Autism" (Autism)

#### Primetime Comedy

- ***Desperate Housewives*** (ABC): "You're Gonna Love Tomorrow" (Childhood obesity)

#### Primetime Drama

- ***Law & Order*** (NBC): "Falling" (Developmental disabilities)
- ***Law & Order: SVU*** (NBC): "Selfish" (Measles and vaccinations)
- ***ER*** (NBC): "Old Times" (Organ donation)

#### Primetime Minor Storyline

- ***ER*** (NBC): "Old Times" (Safer surgery checklist)
- ***Private Practice*** (ABC): "Worlds Apart" (Diabetes)

#### Children's Programming

- ***Lincoln Heights*** (ABC Family): "The Day Before Tomorrow" (Domestic violence)
- "Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change" produced by Sesame Street in association with Worldwide Pants Inc. on PBS (Post-combat injuries and PTSD)

#### Global Health Storyline

- ***Law & Order: SVU*** (NBC): "Retro" (HIV/AIDS)

Funded by the CDC, The California Endowment, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Health Resources and Services Administration's Division of Transplantation and Poison Control Program, Hollywood, Health & Society provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for health storylines, including free consultations and briefings with CDC and partner experts. The program is based at the USC Annenberg School's Norman Lear Center as a one-stop-shop for writers, producers

and others in search of credible information on a wide range of public health topics. For more information about resources for writers, visit [www.usc.edu/hhs](http://www.usc.edu/hhs).

The Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center studying and shaping the impact of entertainment and media on society. Based at the USC Annenberg School for Communication, the Lear Center works to bridge the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. For more information, visit [www.learcenter.org](http://www.learcenter.org).

Located in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California, the USC Annenberg School for Communication is among the nation's leading institutions devoted to the study of journalism and communication, and their impact on politics, culture and society. With an enrollment of more than 1,900 graduate and undergraduate students, USC Annenberg offers Bachelor's, Master's and doctoral degrees in journalism, communication, public diplomacy and public relations. For more information, please visit [www.annenberg.usc.edu](http://www.annenberg.usc.edu).

###