Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S) is a program of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The California Endowment and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. HH&S is a free resource for entertainment writers working on medical and health storylines.

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Health Headlines

HIV Treatment Offers Hope
For HIV positive mothers in developing countries, breastfeeding is a conundrum. Breast milk provides immune protection but can serve as a route for HIV mother-to-child transmission. Even if formula were affordable, obtaining clean water is difficult. Recent research results offer hope through an extended regimen of antiretroviral drugs for the infant that reduces HIV transmission by 50%. Read more about mother-to-child transmission and HIV in African women. (Baltimore Sun, 7.10.08)

The War on Obesity
In Los Angeles, city officials are working to ban the establishment of new fast-food restaurants in an area where 30% of adults are obese. This new ban introduces “health issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic issues into restaurant zoning” where as before, bans were due to “aesthetic.

Bridging Culture and Health
In a recent Orange County Planned Parenthood information session, recent Vietnamese immigrant women blushed as free condoms were handed out; many were too embarrassed to take them for themselves, accepting the condoms “for friends” and referring to the handouts as “raincoats.” Although this method of sexual health education may be effective for the US population, sensitivity to cultural traditions and taboos is essential to optimize impact in ethnic communities. Read more about cultural competence in health. (Los Angeles Times, 7.08.08)

News from Funding Agencies

Millions Against Smoking
The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Michael R. Bloomberg have committed a total of $500 million to boost worldwide governmental action to “increase the tobacco tax, change the image of tobacco, protect nonsmokers from exposure to other people’s smoke and help people quit.” In addition, the Gates foundation will be promoting the MPOWER program made up of six smoking intervention components. Read the news release and more about smoking.

Innovative Prevention
Health consequences for women with sexually transmitted diseases can range from infertility to cervical cancer. Recent CDC research revealed that “one in four teenage girls has a sexually transmitted disease.” The CDC recommends vaccination, STD screening, and prevention strategies to combat the incidence of STDS. Current innovative programs include “express visit options” and confidential screening in high school-based clinics. To learn more about STDs, read the press release and tip sheet.

Promising Futures
Plagued by gang violence and poverty, the Ramona Gardens housing project in LA offers little opportunity for its youth. To break this cycle, the California Endowment will fund an anti-gang program to assess needs there. In addition, the nonprofit Legacy LA will focus on positive leadership, community health, and environmental factors in a new fellowship program and a youth, arts, and nature center. This program promises a brighter future for the community and its youth. To learn more about youth violence, read the press release and the tip sheet.

Real People, Real Lives

Rx: Deportation
Luis Alberto Jimenez is an illegal immigrant who suffered brain injuries in a car crash. Since Medicare does not offer long-term care for undocumented persons, a nursing home or rehabilitation center were not options. To cut a costly hospital stay, Martin Memorial Hospital privately repatriated Jimenez. Deportation is not uncommon in many American hospitals that must arrange post-hospital care. Jimenez’s case represents one of many legal battles and epitomizes two “flawed American systems, immigration and health care.” (The New York Times, 8.03.08)

Assimilating with Assistance
As a doula, Sheila Capistany has assisted new mothers through the physical and emotional uncertainty associated with pregnancy and childbirth. Immigration provides a greater challenge for expectant mothers who are uprooted from their families and expected to navigate alien customs, language and health care. Doulas employed directly from immigrant communities have become invaluable sources of social support for up to two years of a child’s life. Learn more about pregnancy and women’s health. (West Seattle Herald, 7.07.08)

Facebook for Transplantation
Bethany Dawson was born with gastrochisis, a defect that causes her intestines to develop outside her abdominal wall. One-year-old Bethany needs a bowel and liver transplant. Facebook, a social marketing Website, was utilized by Bethany’s parents to find a donor. They developed a “Help Save My Daughter Bethany” page on Facebook. As of June, the site had 30,000 friends but a donor had not yet been found. To learn more about organ donation click here. (Fox News, 6.24.08)

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