

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kathy Le
323-782-3322
anhthy.le@usc.edu



HOLLYWOOD, HEALTH & SOCIETY

***USC ANNENBERG SCHOOL ANNOUNCES THE 9th ANNUAL
SENTINEL FOR HEALTH AWARDS CALL FOR ENTRIES***

New category established to recognize children's programming

LOS ANGELES, May 28, 2008—Hollywood, Health & Society, a project of the USC Annenberg School's Norman Lear Center, announces a call for entries for the ninth annual Sentinel for Health Awards. A children's programming category will be added to this year's Awards program. The deadline for entries is July 15, 2008.

The Sentinel for Health Awards, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 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: primetime drama, primetime comedy, primetime minor storyline, daytime drama, Spanish-language *telenovela*, and children's programming.

The 2008 winners will be selected through two rounds of judging. Health topic experts from CDC and other partner organizations will review entries for accuracy. Judges from entertainment and public health venues will review finalists in each category to determine the winners.

Information for Award applicants can be found at
<http://www.learcenter.org/pdf/Sentinel08Entry.pdf>

"TV writers and producers not only entertain audiences, but they affect them as well," said Martin Kaplan, director of the Norman Lear Center. "We know this both from our research, and from stories that viewers tell. This award recognizes the responsible and creative use of that power by television writers and producers."

Sandra de Castro Buffington, director of Hollywood, Health & Society, adds that writers want their storylines to be realistic and accurate. "Writers contact the HH&S program to access highly credible experts, quickly and free of charge, to ensure a storyline is on track. Our staff is knowledgeable and responsive, arranges expert consultations by phone or by taking the expert to meet with the writer. The free consulting service saves writers a lot of time when they are on deadline and need accurate information and examples for their scripts. We work with dozens of shows and respond to hundreds of requests by writers

each year on topics such as diabetes, fetal alcohol syndrome, HIV, substance abuse, breast cancer, safe sex, autism, organ donation, and disabilities.”

Last year, NBC’s *Friday Night Lights* received first place in the primetime drama category with a storyline on teenage sex; ABC’s *General Hospital* took first and second place in a daytime drama with HIV and lung cancer storylines; ABC’s *Grey’s Anatomy* took home two awards—first place for a minor storyline on breast cancer, and third place in the same category for a storyline about diabetes; NBC’s *Scrubs* received first place in primetime comedy with a storyline about postpartum depression; and Telemundo’s *Así es la Vida* won first place in the *telenovela* category with a safe sex storyline.

Funded by the CDC, The California Endowment and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S) provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for health storylines, including online materials, and consultations and briefings with experts. Based at the USC Annenberg School’s Norman Lear Center, HH&S is 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, go to www.usc.edu/hhs.

The Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center studying the impact of entertainment 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.

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, visit www.annenberg.usc.edu.

###