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ALCOHOLISM STORYLINE AWARDED SENTINEL FOR HEALTH AWARD FOR DAYTIME DRAMA

Los Angeles, CA – Hollywood, Health & Society, a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the USC Annenberg School’s Norman Lear Center, today announced that the fourth annual Sentinel for Health Award for Daytime Drama was awarded to the CBS soap opera *The Young & the Restless* for its storyline, “Neil’s Battle with Alcoholism.” The award was presented at a special ceremony held at the Writers Guild of America, west in Los Angeles. This is the second time that *The Young & the Restless* received the award—in 2001, the storyline “Raul’s Diabetes” was honored.

The Sentinel for Health award recognizes exemplary achievements of daytime drama storylines that inform, educate and motivate viewers to make choices for healthier and safer lives. The winner was selected from among four finalists by a panel of entertainment professionals and health communication experts. This year’s finalists were “Organ Donation: Rick Bauer Gets Richard Winslow’s Heart,” “Safe Sex: Marina Prepares to Sleep with Ben,” both from *Guiding Light*, “Al’s Drug Addiction” from *One Life to Live* and “Neil’s Battle with Alcoholism” from *The Young & the Restless*.

"Storytelling is an awesome power," said Martin Kaplan, associate dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and director of the Norman Lear Center. "When it's harnessed to talk about important public health issues, like alcoholism, it has an amazing ability to touch viewers' hearts and minds."

CDC analysis of data from the 1999 Healthstyles Survey shows that nearly half (48%) of regular viewers of soap operas—those who watch at least twice a week—learned about a disease or how to prevent it from a soap opera in the past year. More than one-third (34%) took some action as a result, like discussing it with others, giving advice or calling a doctor.

“The judging panel was impressed with the complex portrayal of this issue and its potential to influence audience members who may have a similar problem in their family,” added Vicki Beck, director of the Lear Center’s Hollywood, Health & Society project and former director of the CDC’s program for entertainment education. “The storyline shows how the disease impacts the individual, the family and friends, and that treatment, although difficult, is available and successful.”

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The 2003 award is the fourth to be given. The third Sentinel for Health Award for Daytime Drama was given in 2002 to CBS's *The Bold and the Beautiful* for "Tony's HIV," which portrayed a young man coming to terms with his diagnosis and living a full life with a new wife and child. The CDC noted a dramatic increase in callers to the national AIDS hotline from a public service announcement that aired after two episodes. In 2000, "Viki's Breast Cancer," produced by *One Life to Live*, won the Sentinel award.

Each storyline entry for the Sentinel for Health Award is reviewed by a panel of CDC experts for accuracy of depictions. Finalists move on to a second round of judging by a panel of experts representing entertainment, advocacy, academic and public health organizations. The panel reviews storylines for entertainment value and potential benefit to the viewing audience.

Funded by the CDC, Hollywood, Health & Society provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for health storylines. It 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. The Lear Center works with the CDC to supply writers and producers of all types of entertainment content with accurate health information through individual briefings, special seminars, expert consultation and through an innovative Web site, www.entertainment.usc.edu/hhs.

The Norman Lear Center is a multidisciplinary research and public policy center exploring implications of the convergence of entertainment, commerce and 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 1500 graduate and undergraduate students, USC Annenberg offers B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in journalism, communications and public relations. For more information, visit www.annenberg.usc.edu.

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