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HOLLYWOOD, HEALTH & SOCIETY

***Teen Obesity, AIDS and Child Abuse Are Among Finalists for
Hollywood, Health & Society's Sentinel for Health Awards;
Prime Time Shows Are Recognized for the First Time at Oct. 26 Event***

Los Angeles, CA – Hollywood, Health, & Society, a joint project of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI), announced ten finalists today for the fifth annual Sentinel for Health Awards. The awards recognize exemplary achievements of television storylines that inform, educate and motivate viewers to make choices for healthier and safer lives. This is the first year the awards will honor storylines from prime time dramas and comedies.

The ten finalists received highest scores in a field of 30 eligible entries that were reviewed by topic experts from the CDC and its partner agencies. *The Young and the Restless, One on One, Grounded for Life, Strong Medicine, American Dreams, Everwood, Judging Amy, ER and Law & Order:SVU* are contenders for awards in four categories: daytime drama, prime time comedy, prime time drama and prime time minor storyline. Topics to be recognized include sexually transmitted diseases/AIDS, teen obesity and heart disease, alcoholism, polio, anorexia, child abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome. All the finalists will be recognized in an awards ceremony followed by a panel discussion with the writers on Oct. 26 at the Writers Guild of America, west, 7000 W. Third St. in Los Angeles.

"We are thrilled with the response to our expanded awards program this year," said Martin Kaplan, associate dean of the USC Annenberg School for Communication and director of the Norman Lear Center. "The Sentinel for Health Awards allow us to applaud the incredibly creative works of daytime and prime time writers and producers who play a crucial role in educating and entertaining television audiences."

In addition to the awards activity, Hollywood, Health & Society works with CDC, NCI, and Annenberg and Keck School of Medicine faculty and students to study the content and impact of health storylines. "Numerous studies have shown that viewers pay attention to health information in TV shows, and some people even seek care for symptoms when they learn about them through a favorite character," explained Vicki Beck, director of the Lear Center's Hollywood, Health & Society. "Colleagues from the shows tell us they see this evidence as well, in the letters that viewers write to thank them for addressing important health issues."

First-round judging for the Sentinel for Health Awards was conducted by topic experts who evaluated accuracy of health depictions. Twenty expert panels participated in this activity at the CDC. The ten finalists were then evaluated at USC by an expert panel

representing entertainment, academic and public health organizations. The second-round judges scored finalists on entertainment value and potential benefit to the viewing audience.

The Sentinel for Health Awards were established in 2000 and have recognized four daytime drama storylines as winners: "Viki's Breast Cancer," *One Life to Live* (2000); "Raul's Diabetes," *The Young and the Restless* (2001); "Tony's HIV," *The Bold and the Beautiful* (2002) and "Neil's Alcoholism," *The Young and the Restless* (2003).

Funded by the CDC and NCI, Hollywood, Health & Society provides entertainment industry professionals with accurate and timely information for health storylines, including free consultations and briefings with CDC and NCI experts. 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. For more information about resources for writers, go to the Hollywood, Health & Society Web site at 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.

Sentinel for Health Awards: 2004 Finalists

Daytime Drama

- The Young & the Restless (CBS) *Lily & Kevin: Danger Within* STDs

Prime Time Comedy

- Grounded for Life (WB) *Pressure Drop* Hypertension
- One on One (UPN) *No More Wire Hangers* Alcoholism

Prime Time Drama

- American Dreams (NBC) *Will's Post-Polio Sequelae* Polio
- Everwood (WB) *Sick* HIV
- Law & Order:SVU (NBC) *Shaken* Shaken Baby Syndrome
- Law & Order:SVU (NBC) *Choice* Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

Prime Time Minor Storyline

- ER (NBC) *Elgin Storyline* Teen Obesity & Heart Disease
- Judging Amy (CBS) *Christenings* Anorexia
- Strong Medicine (Lifetime) *Heartbeats & Deadbeats* HIV