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**HOLLYWOOD, HEALTH & SOCIETY**

**Cancer and Teen Sexual Health Storylines Take Top Primetime Honors  
in USC Sentinel for Health Awards;  
Gang Violence Recognized in New Children's Programming Category**

Los Angeles, October 2, 2008 – The AMC drama *Breaking Bad* received first place in the primetime drama category of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center's Sentinel for Health Awards for a storyline about the emotional and financial hardships a man endures while battling terminal lung cancer. The ABC drama *Private Practice* took first place for a primetime minor storyline on teen sex and sexually transmitted diseases, and ABC's *Desperate Housewives* took first place in primetime comedy for a storyline about cancer. Telemundo took home its third Sentinel Award, in the Spanish-language *telenovela* category, for a construction safety storyline in *Pecados Ajenos*.

Hollywood, Health & Society, a partnership of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), The California Endowment, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Health Resources and Services Administration's Division of Transplantation and Poison Control Program, and the USC Annenberg School's Norman Lear Center, recognized the five first place winners from a field of 31 storylines at the ninth annual Sentinel for Health Awards on October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Writers Guild of America, West, in Los Angeles. HIV, substance abuse, lung cancer and organ transplantation were some of the topics tackled in other storylines that were recognized.

"Television writers and producers are in a unique position both to entertain and to inform viewers," said Martin Kaplan, the Norman Lear Chair at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and director of the Lear Center. "The Sentinel for Health Awards are a chance to shine a spotlight on master storytellers who use their power not only to make hits, but also to educate audiences about crucial issues."

The Sentinel for Health Awards recognize exemplary achievements of television storylines that inform, educate and motivate viewers to make choices for healthier and safer lives. First-round judging was conducted by more than 65 topic experts who evaluated accuracy of health depictions. Twelve expert panels participated in this activity at the CDC and partner organizations. The 13 finalists were then evaluated at USC by an expert panel representing entertainment, academic and public health organizations. Second-round judges scored finalists on entertainment value and potential benefit to the viewing audience. The Sentinel for Health Awards were established in 2000 to recognize daytime dramas that addressed health topics in

their storylines. In 2004, primetime drama and comedy categories were added for the first time (primetime drama, primetime minor storyline and primetime comedy), and in 2005 a Spanish-language *telenovela* category was added. This year marks the first year for the Children's Programming category.

The results of the 2008 Sentinel for Health Awards are:

#### Daytime Drama

Finalist: "Barbara's Cancer Story," *As the World Turns* (CBS)

Topic: Oral cancer

#### Primetime Comedy

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Lynette's Cancer," *Desperate Housewives* (ABC)

Topic: Cancer

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Something Coming," *Desperate Housewives* (ABC)

Topic: Drug addiction

#### Spanish-Language Telenovela

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Construction Safety Storyline," *Pecados Ajenos* (Telemundo)

Topic: Occupational health

#### Children's Programming

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "The Vision," *Lincoln Heights* (ABC Family)

Topic: Gang violence

#### Primetime Minor Storyline

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "In Which Addison Finds a Showerhead," *Private Practice* (ABC)

Topic: Teen sexual health

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "In Which Cooper Finds a Port in His Storm," *Private Practice* (ABC)

Topic: Newborn abandonment

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Piece of My Heart," *Grey's Anatomy* (ABC)

Topic: HIV & pregnancy

#### Primetime Drama

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Walt's Lung Cancer," *Breaking Bad* (AMC)

Topic: Lung cancer

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Abby's Alcohol Relapse," *ER* (NBC)

Topic: Alcohol abuse

Finalist: "Betrayal," *Law & Order* (NBC)

Topic: Sexual abuse

Finalist: "A Bend in the Road," *Without A Trace* (CBS)

Topic: Organ transplantation

Finalist: "The Right Stuff," *House* (FOX)

Topic: Cancer

Funded by the CDC, The California Endowment, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Health Resources Services Administration 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).

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