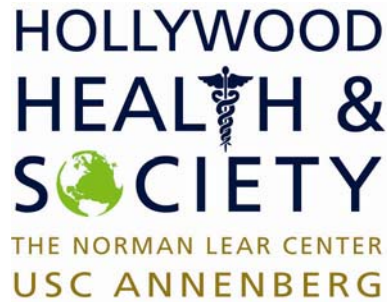


For Immediate Release

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ER, DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES, SESAME STREET TAKE PRIMETIME TOP HONORS IN SENTINEL FOR HEALTH AWARDS

Organ Donation, Childhood Obesity, Post-Combat Injury Storylines Recognized

Law & Order: SVU's HIV/AIDS Episode Wins New Global Health Category

Los Angeles, September 24, 2009 – The NBC drama ***ER*** received first place in the primetime drama category of the USC Annenberg Norman Lear Center's Sentinel for Health Awards for a storyline involving a grandmother's anguish as she makes the difficult decision to allow her grandson's organs to be donated, giving meaning to his tragic death and a second chance at life to others. The same ***ER*** episode also earned first place for a primetime minor storyline about the use of a safe surgery checklist in the operating room, and ABC's ***Desperate Housewives*** took first place in primetime comedy for a storyline about childhood obesity. In daytime drama, the CBS show ***As The World Turns*** took first place for a storyline about alcoholism, and NBC's ***Law and Order: SVU*** took home a Sentinel Award in the new global health storyline category for a show about HIV/AIDS deniers, whose disbelief in the existence of the HIV virus results in tragedy.

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 six first-place winners from a field of 30 storylines at the tenth annual Sentinel for Health Awards on September 23 at the Writers Guild of America, West, in Los Angeles. Autism, measles vaccinations, diabetes and domestic violence were some of the topics tackled in other recognized storylines.

"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 Journalism 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 90 topic experts who evaluated the accuracy of health depictions. Eighteen expert panels participated in this activity at the CDC and partner organizations. The 11 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.

"Every day millions of viewers worldwide learn something new about health from TV storylines and take action on what they've learned," says Sandra de Castro Buffington, director of the Hollywood, Health & Society program. "Viewers turn on their televisions to follow stories that touch their hearts and minds and strongly influence the choices they make. Recognizing the profound impact of TV storylines on health knowledge, attitudes and behavior, we honor writers and producers who weave accurate health messages into their storytelling."

Daytime Drama

- FIRST PLACE: ***As The World Turns*** (CBS): "Carly's Alcohol Story" (Alcohol abuse)
- SECOND PLACE: ***Days of our Lives*** (NBC): "Living with Autism" (Autism)

Primetime Comedy

- FIRST PLACE: ***Desperate Housewives*** (ABC): "You're Gonna Love Tomorrow" (Childhood obesity)

Primetime Drama

- FIRST PLACE: ***ER*** (NBC): "Old Times" (Organ donation)
- SECOND PLACE: ***Law & Order*** (NBC): "Falling" (Developmental disabilities)
- THIRD PLACE: ***Law & Order: SVU*** (NBC): "Selfish" (Measles and vaccinations)

Primetime Minor Storyline

- FIRST PLACE: ***ER*** (NBC): "Old Times" (Safer surgery checklist)
- FINALIST: ***Private Practice*** (ABC): "Worlds Apart" (Diabetes)

Children's Programming

- FIRST PLACE: "Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change" produced by Sesame Street in association with Worldwide Pants Inc. on PBS (Post-combat physical and invisible injuries)
- SECOND PLACE: ***Lincoln Heights*** (ABC Family): "The Day Before Tomorrow" (Domestic violence)

Global Health Storyline

- FIRST PLACE: ***Law & Order: SVU*** (NBC): "Retro" (HIV/AIDS)

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

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 and Journalism, 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 and Journalism 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.

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