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## **Public Health Hosts Dialogues Focusing on Issues Facing Women**

Topics include health care reform and healthy aging in LA County

LOS ANGELES – The Department of Public Health, in collaboration with 30 partner organizations, tomorrow will host a pair of community dialogues to address key issues that affect the lives of women in Los Angeles County, including health care reform. The dialogues, which will be held at the California Endowment downtown starting at 8:00 a.m., will bring together about 300 health care providers, public health professionals, researchers, advocates, community leaders, and legislative representatives.

“These dialogues represent a unique opportunity for hundreds of women’s health leaders to discuss issues that are not only affecting the lives of women in Los Angeles County today but will only be magnified as our population ages and as health care reform becomes more of a reality,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer.

### **Healthy Aging**

The morning dialogue will assist in preparing the stakeholder community for the dramatic increase in the number of aging women and facilitate the integration of ‘women and aging’ issues into their future organizational plans. Participants will be informed of key issues and evidence-based practices, given a chance to dialogue with experts, and be provided with tools and resources.

Topics will include:

- The Coming Epidemic of Late Life Cognitive Impairment
- The Diabetes, Heart Disease, and Dementia Connection
- Caregiving: Aging in Place
- Mental Health, Depression and Stress
- The Economics of Aging
- Research Priorities
- Intimacy and Sexuality for Aging Women

“With the increasing number of women who are in the ‘second half’ of their life – 50 years and older – greater attention is being paid to creating a quality of life that takes into account the many demands on older women. Many are still caregivers to children, their spouse and elderly parents, while dealing with personal physical and biological changes, and continuing that pursuit of meaning and purpose in the next chapters of their lives,” said Grace Cheng Braun, President and CEO, WISE & Healthy Aging.

“Women age with as much diversity as they live. Some are healthy and vibrant; others are depressed and functionally limited. As women, we can maximize the likelihood of healthy aging



by adopting healthy lifestyles early in life. That being said, it is never too late. Adopting a healthy diet, exercise, making social connections and other changes at any age can increase the probability that you will live to old age with better health and well-being,” said Debra Cherry, PhD, Executive Vice President, Alzheimer’s Association, California Southland Chapter.

Along with the LA County Department of Public Health Office of Women’s Health, the collaborating agencies for the Healthy Aging for Women dialogue include: AltaMed Health Services Corporation; Alzheimer’s Association, California Southland Chapter; American Diabetes Association; American Heart Association, Los Angeles County; Harbor UCLA Medical Center; California Family Health Council, Inc.; California Geriatric Education Center, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; California Senior Legislature; City of El Monte Community and Senior Services; City of Inglewood Senior Center; City of Los Angeles Area Agency on Aging; Glendale Commission on the Status of Women; Glendale Adventist Medical Center; Grandparents as Parents, Inc; LA Caregiver Resource Center; Los Angeles County Commission for Women; Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Office of Diversity & Cultural Competency; Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Senior Health; LAC+USC Violence Intervention Program; Life-Long; Partners in Care Foundation; WISE & Healthy Aging; Women’s Foundation of California.

## **Health Care Reform**

The afternoon portion of the event will explore the opportunities and challenges in health care reform from a gendered perspective, while also examining how health care reform implementation will affect women differently due to race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, ability to pay, age, and immigration status. The meeting will begin a conversation that will work to ensure that women’s health is recognized, prioritized and protected as Los Angeles County begins to implement health care reform.

“It is imperative for women to have a significant voice in the process of health care reform implementation and this dialogue represents a key step in the right direction,” said Ellen Eidem, Director of Public Health Office of Women’s Health Program.

Agencies collaborating with Public Health to host the Health Care Reform dialogue include Black Women for Wellness, California Black Women’s Health Project, California Latinas for Reproductive Justice, National Health Law Program, Planned Parenthood Los Angeles and The Saban Free Clinic.

“It is critically important that women’s health is a priority during this historic time,” said event collaborator Crystal D. Crawford, Esq., Chief Executive Officer of the California Black Women’s Health Project. “If women do not have access to quality, comprehensive health care, the health of the entire nation will be in jeopardy.”

“Currently, there are unique challenges and barriers women face when seeking care. Health care reform holds tremendous promise for women,” said Sue Dunlap, Co-CEO of Planned Parenthood Los Angeles. “But we—along with our community partners—will continue to advocate that



women’s health is prioritized as Los Angeles County and California implement health care reform.”

**LA Health Brief: *Healthy Women: Wellness Across the Lifespan***

To coincide with the dialogue on Women and Aging, the Health Assessment Unit of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’s Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology is releasing an LA Health Brief: “Healthy Women: Wellness Across the Lifespan.”

The brief details the changing face of the aging female population and the growing burden of chronic conditions among women as they age. More than half of women 65 years and older report being diagnosed with between two and five chronic conditions of depression, diabetes, heart disease, high cholesterol, and hypertension.

For a copy of the health brief please go to: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

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