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**Former First Lady of Wisconsin Endorses National Women's Health Week (May 12),
Encourages Women to Become Better Advocates for Their Health**

(May 5, 2003) Sue Ann Thompson, President of the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation (WWHF) and Former First Lady of Wisconsin, is encouraging women to become better advocates for their health by participating in National Women's Health Week beginning, fittingly enough, the day after Mother's Day.

"Whether it's making an appointment for a physical, starting an exercise program, or simply taking the time to research women's health issues, National Women's Health Week presents an opportunity for women in Wisconsin to begin making their own health as much a priority as their family's health," says Sue Ann.

This special initiative of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Women's Health, begins Monday, May 12, 2003 with National Women's Health Check-Up Day. Community health centers, hospitals and other health providers across the nation will be offering free health screenings in some of the country's underserved areas including 20 locations in Wisconsin (Antigo, Fond du Lac, Friendship, Green Bay, Hayward, Kenosha, Madison, Manitowoc, Marshfield, Mauston, Medford, Menominee, Oshkosh, Pleasant Prairie, Stevens Point, Sturgeon Bay, Tomahawk, Two Rivers, Watertown, Wausau).

Sue Ann enthusiastically endorses the National Women's Health Week celebration. "It all begins with a healthy woman," has become her personal mantra and the slogan for WWHF. "Women need access to the most up-to-date information about health issues that disproportionately affect women or affect women differently from men, in order to make good decisions for themselves and their families," says Sue Ann. "Our philosophy is 'knowledge is power.' I learned this lesson firsthand, because, unlike my mother who died of breast cancer, early detection saved my own life."

Sue Ann urges women to become proactive in their approach to healthcare by forming a list of their own questions as they visit family doctors. In that same spirit, the WWHF continues to educate

women across Wisconsin with seminars, lectures, and Web information in cooperation with doctors and healthcare facilities all across the state.

Molly Carnes, M.D., M.S., Professor, Department of Medicine, University of Wisconsin-Madison, is also Director of the UW's Center for Women's Health and Women's Health Research. Dr. Carnes says, "Women are traditionally responsible for attending the basic needs of their children, parents, and often spouses. At this time of international turmoil, it is especially important to focus on the health of women and their families, because the health of women and children is a marker of health for a community and a nation. Women, please take time to check up on your own health!"

Sue Ann would also like to raise awareness about several women's health resources available throughout the year including:

- **The Wisconsin Women's Health Hotline**, 1-800-218-8408 (Voice/TDD). The hotline is available for clinical advice on health issues such as cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse, eating disorders and sexual assault, as well as information about the Wisconsin Well Woman Program.
- **The Wisconsin Well Woman Program**, (http://ww.dhfs.state.wi.us/dph_bcdhp/wwwp/). Pays for mammograms, Pap tests and other screening exams for women who meet age and income criteria. Information about the Well Woman Program local coordinating agency in your county and eligibility can be found by calling the Wisconsin Women's Health Hotline at 1-800-218-8408 or through the website.
- **The Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation Website**, (www.wwhf.org): Information about women's health issues with links to other sources, as well as a list of the Foundation's education and outreach programs offered in Wisconsin.

Information about women's health is also available through the **Office of Women's Health Website** (www.4woman.gov) and **The National Women's Health Information Center**, 1-800-994-WOMAN (1-800-994-9662), or 1-800-220-5446 for the hearing impaired. The center offers health information by trained English and Spanish speaking specialists, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST, excluding federal holidays.

For a complete list of centers participating in National Women's Check-Up Day and information on events during National Women's Health Week, visit www.4woman.org or call the Wisconsin

Women's Health Hotline at 1-800-218-8408 or the Wisconsin Women's Health Foundation at 1-800-448-5148.

SIDE BAR:

If you are 20, 50, 70 or in between...ask your health care professional these questions and live well.

1. Do I need to have a mammogram? When? How often? If not, why not?
2. How often should I do a breast self-exam?
3. How will I know if hormone replacement therapy is right for me?
4. How often should I have my blood pressure checked?
5. Can you provide me with diet/nutrition advice?
6. Should I be checked for osteoporosis? Perhaps a bone density test? If not, why not?
7. How do I prevent (or treat) osteoporosis?
8. How much calcium is right for me? What is the best way for me to obtain this calcium?
9. Should I engage in exercise? What kind? How often should I exercise?
10. What are the first signs of menopause?
11. How often should I have a pelvic exam and Pap smear?
12. Should I have my cholesterol level checked?
13. How often should my thyroid levels be checked?
14. Should I get any regular vaccinations now that I am an adult?
15. Should I be screened for colon cancer?
16. How can you help me stop smoking?
17. Is my emotional state affecting my physical health? If so, what do you recommend?
18. How do I find help if I'm being battered?