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About the DHHS Office On Women's Health

WHO WE ARE

The Office on Women's Health (OWH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) was established in 1991 to improve women's health. We have expanded that charge to include girls. We want all U.S. women and girls to be healthier and have a better sense of well-being. Our mission: to provide leadership to promote health equity for women and girls through sex- and gender-specific approaches.

To achieve that long-term goal, OWH focuses on the health differences (disparities) between women and men, between girls and boys, and among populations of women. Differences in health can be a function of sex (whether you are female or male), gender, race/ethnicity, age, income, education, disabilities, immigrant status, health insurance, culture and geographic location, among many other factors.

OWH serves as the focal point for women's health activities within HHS, through our leadership and collaboration efforts. Through grants and contracts, OWH funds a wide spectrum of activities and programs in support of our mission. We work with many partners, including federal government agencies; non-profit organizations; consumer groups; associations of health care professionals; tribal organizations; and state, county and local governments.

OWH has three major goals that guide us:

1) To develop and impact national women's health policy;
2) To develop, adapt, evaluate and replicate model programs on women's health; and
3) To educate, influence and collaborate with health organizations, health care professionals and the public.

OWH MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

OWH is led by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health (Women's Health), Dr. Wanda K. Jones. Our central office is located in Washington, DC. Frances E. Ashe-Goins, RN, MPH, is the Deputy Director of OWH. Valerie Scardino, MPA, is the Director of one of our two Divisions, the Division of Outreach and Collaboration. Barbara James, MPH, is the Director, Division of Program Coordination. Ten Regional Women's Health Coordinators are located throughout the country to serve women and girls with regional, state and local public health initiatives.

WHAT WE OFFER

1. GRANTS AND CONTRACTS FOR MODEL PROGRAMS ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

We promote the development and implementation of model initiatives that address the health needs of women of different ages, cultures, races and ethnic groups. We fund these programs in communities throughout the United States. By doing so, we work to create comprehensive and culturally appropriate prevention, education and treatment services for women. The health issues of women across the lifespan are targeted. Our grantees and contractors strive to develop and integrate culturally appropriate practices

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and messages in medical education and community outreach efforts.

2. WEBSITES & RESOURCE CENTER

We manage two federal websites and an Information Referral Center on the health issues of women and girls. We also provide Information Referral Specialists at the National Breastfeeding Helpline. These services provide reliable, up-to-date and commercial-free information that has been vetted by the federal government.

- A website on women's health at www.womenshealth.gov
- A website on girls' health at www.girlshealth.gov
- An Information Referral Center, available by making a toll-free telephone call to 1-800-994-9662 (or TDD, 1-888-220-5446).
- A National Breastfeeding Helpline, available by calling the toll-free numbers above.

The **womenshealth.gov** website offers access to more than 4,000 publications and 2,000 organizations on more than 800 health topics. The website contains fact sheets; frequently asked questions (FAQs); information on national health education campaigns; a calendar of national and local events; daily news on women's health topics; and online journals and dictionaries.

The **girlshealth.gov** website promotes healthy, positive behaviors in girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The site provides reliable, useful information on health issues they face as young women. It uses an interactive, user-friendly format to keep them engaged and interested in learning more about their health.

The **Information Referral Center** offers a toll-free phone number for callers: 1-800-994-9662 (or TDD, 1-888-220-5446). Information Referral Specialists answer questions on women's and girls' health in either English or Spanish. They can also mail additional information on health topics or make referrals to relevant websites and health organizations.

The **National Breastfeeding Helpline** offers trained breastfeeding peer counselors who give support and encouragement. They also help with basic breastfeeding questions and concerns. Call toll-free to 1-800-994-9662 (or TDD, 1-888-220-5446), the same phone numbers listed for the Information Referral Center.

3. NATIONAL DATABASES

Quick Health Data Online is available at http://www.healthstatus2010.com/owh. This online health database was developed by the Office on Women's Health. It provides state- and county-level data on many women's health topics for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and possessions. The system houses the *Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook, 2008 Edition,* (described in the next paragraph) as well as other publications, reports, a toolkit, a how-to guide and more. Data are available by sex, race and ethnicity. It was previously known as the National Women's Health Indicators Database.

The ***Women's Health and Mortality Chartbook, 2008 Edition***, is available at http://www.healthstatus2010.com/owh/chartbook/ChartBookData_search.asp. The *Chartbook* is a statistical resource on women's health for each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. The 2008 edition was developed by OWH as a tool to help identify changes in vulnerable and underserved populations at the state level, where most decisions regarding health policy are developed and implemented. It provides data on health, health care and risk behavior on all populations in each state for which data are collected. The information presented in this *Chartbook* represents only a small portion of the data available from *Quick Health Data Online*.

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The Health Disparities Profiles examine key health indicators at the state level for different racial and ethnic populations in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Twenty-one health indicators are presented. They highlight some of the key areas related to health disparities among different populations. It can be used as a reference for policymakers and program managers to identify areas where major health disparities exist in each state. It is available online at http://www.healthstatus2010.com/owh/disparities/ChartBookData_search.asp

4. PUBLICATIONS

Our free publications can be obtained by calling our toll-free number at 1-800-994-9662 (or TDD, 1-888-220-5446). You may also view and print many of our materials directly from www.womenshealth.gov. You can also subscribe to our monthly newsletter, *Healthy Women Today*, through the website. Titles of sample publications include the following:

- *A Lifetime of Good Health: Your Guide to Staying Healthy* (English, Spanish and Chinese)
- *An Easy Guide to Breastfeeding* (English, Spanish and Chinese)
- Common Screening and Diagnostic Tests
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About Women's Health
- *HHS Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding*
- How to Get a Second Opinion
- How to Talk to Your Doctor or Nurse
- State Domestic Violence Resources
- Symptoms of Serious Health Conditions
- *Teen Survival Guide*

WHAT WE DO

1. OWH CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK

In May 2008, OWH celebrated the ninth annual National Women's Health Week. This national effort raises awareness about manageable steps all women can take to improve their health. OWH, along with state and local governments, organizations and community partners, promote health fairs and preventive health screenings during National Women's Health Week. Each year beginning with Mother's Day in May, OWH celebrates this women's health event.

THE WOMAN CHALLENGE

This new national walking program for women began during the 2006 National Women's Health Week. The WOMAN Challenge ("*Women and girls Out Moving Across the Nation*") invites women to participate in a free 8-week physical activity program. OWH coordinates the WOMAN Challenge as part of its year long WOMAN Activity Tracker program. Women are encouraged to get at least 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity or 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity each week.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHECK-UP DAY

In May 2008, OWH celebrated the sixth annual National Women's Check-Up Day. This nationwide effort is coordinated by OWH. It encourages women to visit health care professionals to receive regular, preventive check-ups and screenings. On this day, hundreds of health care providers offer free preventive screenings or screenings at reduced rates.

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NATIONAL WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

March 10, 2008, marked the third annual *National Women and Girls' HIV/AIDS Awareness Day*. Through community events, it raises awareness of the increasing impact of HIV/AIDS on the lives of women and girls. The day promotes discussion and provides facts on how women and girls can prevent infection as well as how to live with the disease.

NATIONAL LUPUS AWARENSS CAMPAIGN

This national campaign is designed to increase the awareness of lupus symptoms and its health effects. It provides information to individuals who may be at risk for lupus in the hope of motivating them to seek professional medical evaluation. The campaign will also generate long-overdue public attention for lupus. It is a significant national public health problem that disproportionately affects young women of color. The campaign will be launched in the fall of 2008.

EXHIBITS

Each year OWH attends national and local conferences, health fairs and community events to share information on women's and girls' health. Our display booth, publications and helpful staff highlight the importance of better understanding your health and that of your loved ones. OWH also provides women's health educational materials to other groups and organizations in support of their women's health programs and activities.

2. OWH PROGRAM AREAS

- Bone Health
- Breastfeeding
- Breast Health
- Chronic Disease Prevention
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Girls' Health
- Heart Health
- HIV/AIDS in Women
- Lupus Education and Awareness
- Minority Women's Health Programs
- Obesity Prevention
- Violence Against Women

OUR LOGO: *We adopted the "Every Women" logo because it embodies the true spirit of our office. These diverse women serve as a constant reminder that we strive to improve the health of* ***all*** *women and girls throughout their lifespan.*