



Office on Women's Health

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

About the Office on Women's Health

The Office on Women's Health (OWH) in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the government's champion and focal point for women's health issues. OWH works to redress inequities in research, health care services, and education that have historically placed the health of women at risk. The Office on Women's Health specifically works to promote women's health through:

1. **Coordinating DHHS Women's Health Activities:** OWH serves as the coordinating office for women's health initiatives across the agencies of DHHS, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other agencies and offices.
2. **Public/Private Partnerships:** OWH brings together federal departments, the scientific community, professional organizations, and consumer groups to support and advance women's health issues.
3. **Health Promotion and Outreach:** OWH develops, coordinates, and monitors communication efforts to bring women in every region of America reliable information on a myriad of health topics. It also develops mechanisms to give consumers and the private sector a voice in women's health policy.
4. **Health Care Innovation:** OWH promotes the development and implementation of model initiatives in communities all over the United States to address the health needs of women across different ages, cultures, and races/ethnicities, including issues such as how women receive care and how health care practitioners are educated on women's health.
5. **Health Disparities:** OWH promotes comprehensive and culturally appropriate prevention, diagnostic, and treatment services for women across the lifespan, as well as the integration of culturally appropriate practices in medical education and research.
6. **Regional Support:** OWH supports Regional Women's Health Coordinators (RWHCs) and provides staff support in each of the 10 regions of DHHS. The RWHCs coordinate activities to promote a greater focus on women's health issues at the regional, state, and local levels, including programs in preventive service delivery, research, and the education of the public and health professionals. RWHCs identify regional needs in high-priority health areas, establish networking relationships, and implement initiatives that address regional women's health concerns.



1. COORDINATING DHHS WOMEN'S HEALTH ACTIVITIES

HHS COORDINATING COMMITTEE ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

The HHS Coordinating Committee on Women's Health was established in 1983 to advise the Assistant Secretary for Health (and in 1993, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health (Women's Health)) on current and planned activities across DHHS that would safeguard and improve the physical and mental health of all women in the United States. The Coordinating Committee is chaired by Dr. Wanda K. Jones, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health (Women's Health). The Committee's members include senior-level representatives from each of the federal agencies and offices within the Department of Health and Human Services.

DIABETES TOWN HALL

A Diabetes Town Hall is being sponsored by the HHS Coordinating Committee on Women's Health, with major financial support from OWH. The event will take place on May 20, 2003, in Washington, DC. The objectives are many:

to raise awareness and focus attention on diabetes and women;

to review current scientific knowledge about approaches to prevent, reduce, or delay onset, morbidity, and mortality of diabetes and its complications;

to describe HHS' commitment to the prevention, treatment, control, and cure of diabetes through the discussion of programs, partnerships, and plans; and

to serve as a forum to strengthen partnerships and identify collaborative opportunities.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

OWH is the chair for the DHHS Steering Committee on Violence Against Women. OWH is responsible for coordinating DHHS' response to issues related to family and intimate partner violence. The Steering Committee meets every other month. Other members of the Committee represent leaders within DHHS who have expertise in a multitude of issues, including domestic violence, sexual assault and rape, child abuse and neglect, elder abuse, substance abuse, mental health, minority health, and women's health.

BREASTFEEDING

The effort to develop DHHS' first-ever policy on breastfeeding was coordinated by OWH, and several organizations in the medical, business, women's health, advocacy, and academic communities provided input. The HHS Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding (Blueprint) was released in October 2000, with a special endorsement by the U.S. Surgeon General. The Blueprint recommends that women breastfeed exclusively for the first 46 months of a baby's life, preferably 6 months. The full text of the Blueprint, breastfeeding publications, and resources are available online on the National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) website at <http://www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding/>.

OWH will incorporate the recommendations of the HHS Blueprint for Action into a National Breastfeeding Awareness Campaign. OWH was chosen by the Ad Council for a comprehensive 3-year, public service campaign, which will result in \$40 million of free advertising on television, radio, newspapers, and magazines to promote breastfeeding among first-time parents (mothers and fathers) who would not normally breastfeed their baby. The media campaign will be launched in the winter of 2003.

The campaign's primary goal is to increase awareness among these parents that breast milk is the best nutrition for babies during the first 6 months of life. Its secondary goal is to assure the public that breastfeeding is normal, desirable, and achievable. The campaign has two objectives, both of which are based on Healthy People 2010 objectives: 1) to increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies in the early postpartum period to 75 percent; and 2) to increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their babies in the 6 months following birth to 50 percent by the year 2010.

WOMEN'S HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

OWH established the Federal Interagency Working Group on Women's Health and the Environment in 1994, with representatives from all agencies of the federal government. In June 1999, the Working Group decided to focus for the next three years on six issues regarding the role of environmental factors on women's health. These high-priority areas include asthma, autoimmune diseases, reproductive health, pesticides, dietary supplements, and breastfeeding. The Working Group continues to update its Inventory of Activities, which can be found on NWHIC's website at <http://www.4woman.gov/nwhic/env/>.

A Task Force subcommittee has developed and implemented the Complementary and Alternative Menopausal Study (CAMPS). CAMPS has two objectives: (1) to evaluate the knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of women, ages 45 and older, with regard to menopause and conditions related to menopause; and (2) to include in its research efforts an assessment of environmental influences, such as pharmacological, behavioral, and alternative therapies and practices. This study was conducted in Florida, Minnesota, and Tennessee through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Results of the study will be published in the peer-reviewed journal *Menopause* in the fall of 2003.

HHS WOMEN'S HEALTH TIME CAPSULE INITIATIVE

In FY2002, OWH served as the coordinating agency for the HHS Women's Health Time Capsule Initiative. Working with other Departmental agencies to ensure HHS spoke with one voice, a document was created to highlight the "significant accomplishments in women's health during the past century." The full text of *A Century of Women's Health: 1900—2000* can be found on OWH's web site at <http://www.4woman.gov/TimeCapsule/index.htm>.

In addition, a time capsule was created, which contained more than 70 items documenting how preventive health efforts and health communications evolved and improved over the last century, as well as items that have improved women's quality of life, information on state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment of the diseases that most affect women today, and personal articles that demonstrate women's continued interest in beauty and body image. The time capsule was placed on the campus of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It was registered with the International Time Capsule Society and archived at NIH. It is scheduled to be opened in the year 2100.

In March 2003, OWH received a tentative inquiry from the Maryland Women's History Project to include the site of the time capsule in its Guidebook. This book currently notes more than 150 historic sites throughout the state that reflect the contributions of Maryland women of diverse backgrounds. The Guidebook, developed by the Maryland State Department of Education, also includes a list of suggested activities for classrooms and communities and a Resource Directory.

2. PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

HIV/AIDS

OWH receives funding from the Minority AIDS Initiative Program at DHHS to develop the following two demonstration projects to address persistent gaps in the HIV/AIDS health care needs and services for women.

The Incarcerated and Newly Released Women with HIV/AIDS/STDs Program funds demonstration projects to build a continuum of health care and support services for incarcerated and newly released minority women living with HIV/AIDS/STDs. Three contracts were awarded in FY2002 to the following organizations: Action for Boston Community Development Corporation (Boston, MA); Blacks Assisting Blacks Against AIDS (St. Louis, MO); and The Empowerment Program (Denver, CO). In FY2003, this program expects to offer three new awards.

The Model Mentorship Program for Strengthening Organizational Capacity Program funds demonstration projects for mentorship between minority health organizations and women-based organizations or AIDS service organizations (ASOs) or both. Both mentoring partners receive funding. Programmatic, administrative, fiscal, and technical assistance is provided to expand organizational capacity to provide HIV/AIDS services.

Through mentoring, small organizations become better prepared to operate their agencies and implement successful HIV/AIDS programs independently.

Three contracts were awarded in FY2002 to the following organizations serving as mentors: Center for Health Policy Development (San Antonio, TX); Los Angeles Shanti Foundation (Los Angeles, CA); and Institute for Successful Leadership (Orlando, FL). Five contracts were awarded in FY2002 to the following organizations: Pathway Behavioral Health Services (Miami, FL); HEROES (Columbia, LA); New Vision Community Development Corporation (Darlington, SC); Women's Resource Center (Columbus, SC); and Hope Action Care/Mujeras Unidas Contra el SIDA (San Antonio, TX). In FY2003, this program expects to offer nine new awards.

OWH also funds the HIV/AIDS and Women in the Rural South Program. This program funds demonstration projects for women-based and community-based organizations in the rural South to provide HIV/AIDS prevention education to women living in the rural South. Three contracts were awarded in FY2002 to the following organizations: HEROES (Columbia, LA); Columbus Wellness Center (Columbus, GA); and South Carolina African-American HIV/AIDS Council (Columbus, SC). In FY2003, this program expects to offer three new awards.

The HIV/AIDS and Young Women Pilot Program is a national HIV/AIDS/STDs and violence prevention education program targeted at minority women ages 18-25 years. It was developed to increase their knowledge of HIV and violence prevention and to reduce their risk of contracting HIV. To initiate this program in FY2003, OWH has collaborated with the National Black Women's Health Project, Inc., in Washington, D.C., a national organization devoted to improving the health of the nation's African American women and girls.

LUPUS

The Office on Women's Health has re-energized its efforts to reach as many people affected by lupus as possible through its Lupus Awareness Project. Research statistics have shown that people living in lower income households, women of color, and those living in rural areas without access to medical specialists are more likely to go undiagnosed, incur more damage due to the disease, and have less access to appropriate medications and treatments.

OWH has developed new program initiatives to

- provide educational sessions for the general public in cities that have a high minority population that is affected by this disease;

- provide strategies for the management of this disease by afflicted individuals and their families; and

- present critical scientific sessions for health care providers who treat individuals with lupus.

In FY2002 and FY2003, OWH provided funding support for the Health Resources and Services Administration-Bureau of Primary Health Care, Office of Minority and Women's Health's (HRSA-BPHC/OMWH) Collaborative on Lupus Program. The program has been designed according to the successful format developed by HRSA for other chronic diseases in collaboration with community health centers throughout the country. This program encompasses the "train the trainer" method of educating health care providers in community health centers. Contracts have been awarded to the Arizona Association of Community Health Centers, New Jersey Primary Care Association, Mississippi Primary Care Association, Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, Ohio Primary Care Association, and Tennessee Primary Care Association.

In FY2003, OWH provided funds to NIH's Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) for a lupus awareness conference. A "State of the Science" Seminar on Lupus will be convened at NIH in collaboration with ORWH in Fall 2003. The latest information on lupus research, diagnosis, care, treatment options, and prognosis will be presented at this scientific session.

OWH provided funds to the Lupus Foundation of America in FY2002 to develop a Regional Scientific Educational Session for health care providers. It will present disease diagnosis, care, and treatment information to health care providers in three regional sessions. The Lupus Foundation will partner with their Southeastern Pennsylvania chapter to implement the program. The presentations will be reproduced on a CD-ROM, so it can be distributed to other health care providers who were unable to attend the sessions.

SMOKING

Following its role in coordinating media for outreach for the Surgeon General's Report on Women and Smoking (<http://www.4woman.gov/quitsmoking>), OWH established a partnership with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for a "women's cancers initiative." This partnership developed as a result of previous activities in which OWH worked with NCI and others on the National Action Plan on Breast Cancer: creating patient and provider materials on communicating surgical options to women with breast cancer; updating brochures on cervical cancer, reflecting new screening guidelines; and planning and co-funding meetings.

Among other activities in 2003, the OWH/NCI partnership plans to implement recommendations from the Women, Tobacco, and Cancer: An Agenda for the 21st Century conference. Attendees considered translation, health disparities, and global tobacco control as they addressed topics in biology and cancer; addiction; epidemiology and national surveillance; interventions for prevention and treatment; awareness, risk perception, and communications; community and policy interventions; and global issues.

SPELMAN COLLEGE

In FY2001, and in response to Congressional direction, OWH awarded funds to Spelman College, a historically black college in Atlanta, Georgia. As partners, they developed the Spelman College Health and Wellness Initiative. Program goals: To increase the student body's awareness of African American women's health issues and to improve their physical fitness, nutrition, and spiritual health.

Comparisons of enrolled participants with non-participants will provide recommendations for further use and study. Results of the first full academic year of intervention will be available in the late Spring/early Summer 2003. OWH anticipates continuing its support of the program through the graduation of this cohort of women in 2006.

3. HEALTH PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH INFORMATION CENTER (NWHIC)

OWH maintains the National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC), which provides health information and referrals to consumers of health care services, health professionals, researchers, educators, and students. NWHIC, launched in the fall of 1998, offers a single point-of-entry to over 4,000 publications and 2,000 organizations on more than 800 health topics; over 200 frequently asked questions (FAQs); national health education campaigns; a calendar of events; daily women's health news; and online journals and dictionaries.

In addition, NWHIC features specialty sections by topic area, including healthy pregnancy, violence against women, breastfeeding, smoking cessation, and body image. It also features sections for special populations such as Spanish-speakers, women with disabilities, minority women, young women, the media, and health professionals. In 2002, NWHIC had 4.75 million visitors to the web site, almost 44,000 calls to the Call Center, and 4,500 e-mails.

NWHIC is accessible by toll-free telephone call to 1-800-994-9662 (TDD: 1-888-220-5446) or through the Internet at <http://www.4woman.gov>. Information Specialists are available to answer questions in English and Spanish from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. They can provide publications and referrals to appropriate organizations.

In August 2002, NWHIC partnered with La Leche League International to train our Information Specialists to help callers with common breastfeeding issues, such as questions about nursing and the storage of breast milk. NWHIC can also order free breastfeeding publications and direct users to organizations that can provide additional assistance.

NATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK and NATIONAL WOMEN'S CHECK-UP DAY

In 2004, OWH will celebrate the 5th annual National Women's Health Week (NWHW) from May 9 to May 15. Created by OWH, National Women's Health Week is a national effort by an alliance of organizations to raise awareness about manageable steps women can take to improve their health. The week focuses on the importance of incorporating simple preventive and positive health behaviors into everyday life. The week will start on Mother's Day (May 9) and end on the following Saturday, a time when much attention is already focused on women.

OWH will launch the 2nd National Women's Check-Up Day on May 9, 2004. Health providers across the nation are being encouraged to provide free preventive health services to women on this day and have been invited to sign-up as a provider on the NWHIC web site at www.4woman.gov. Women who call NWHIC's toll-free number will be offered a prevention package and assisted in identifying a healthcare provider for check-ups, if they do not already have one. This day complements and supports OWH's efforts to promote preventive services for women and furthers President Bush's long-range initiative to expand local health centers serving people without health insurance.

In 2003, there were over 1,000 events, proclamations and screenings in locations across the country.

NWHIC'S DAYBOOK

Produced since 1999, NWHIC's Daybook is an annual calendar book filled with up-to-date information and resources on women's health. It has become one of OWH's most popular products, with 320,000 copies distributed in 2003. Users report keeping their Daybook as a reference even after the calendar year has ended because the health information is so useful.

Each Daybook produced by OWH to date has highlighted prevention, culminating in the 2002 volume. It focused on age-appropriate screening exams and preventive services as well as risk factors that should prompt the reader to visit a health provider. The "General Screenings and Immunizations Guidelines for Women" and the "Recommended Screenings and Immunizations for Women with High Risk Factors" are tables developed by OWH. The high demand for them has prompted development of a separate publication containing them, *A Lifetime of Good Health: Your Guide to Staying Healthy*. This document has been translated into Spanish and Chinese.

The 2003 Daybook focuses on the symptoms of common health conditions in women. The book encourages the early detection and treatment of disease or illness in order to improve the health outcomes of its readers.

PICK YOUR PATH TO HEALTH

In FY2001, OWH developed a national education campaign to promote healthy behaviors among women of color called the Pick Your Path to Health (PYPTH) Campaign. PYPTH offers practical, culturally appropriate action steps that women can take to improve their health.

These steps are organized around 12 monthly themes: spirituality, physical activity, weight management, alcohol use, mental health, health care access, drug abuse, family, disease prevention, violence prevention, tobacco use, and responsible sexual behavior.

Through public/private partnerships, the campaign's materials are distributed to local neighborhood groups and local media that are trusted by minority women. The information can then be transformed into formats and messages most appropriate for those individual communities.

Educational materials and additional information on this campaign are available on NWHIC's website at <http://www.4woman.gov/pypth/index.htm>.

To help remind women of these simple steps to better health, OWH first created four pocket calendars targeted to African American, Latina/Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native women. In response to feedback from state and regional women's health coordinators, OWH then developed new pocket planners for 2003 that are specific to rural women and disabled women.

In January 2003, OWH launched 13 pilot, community-based, Pick Your Path to Health programs. These programs are located in every region of the country. Each program uses the PYPTH campaign model to educate, empower, and motivate women to take simple and practical action steps to increase the quality and years of healthy life. They include the Boston Black Women's Health Institute; Delaware Valley Community Health, Inc.; North Carolina Primary Health Care Association in partnership with the Lincoln Community Health Center; and Santa Fe Women's Community Health Center, among others.

NATIONAL BONE HEALTH CAMPAIGN

The National Bone Health Campaign (NBHC), entitled "Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls," was launched September 2001 in Washington, DC. The NBHC is a multi-year national campaign to promote optimal bone health in girls 9 to 12 years old, and thus reduce their risk of osteoporosis later in life. The goal is to educate and encourage girls to establish lifelong healthy habits, especially increased calcium consumption and physical activity to build and maintain strong bones. In addition to girls 9 to 12 years old, the campaign will target adults who influence them, including parents, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, and health care professionals through websites and materials. Visit the campaign's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones>.

The NBHC has used the media extensively, including television, radio and print ads, as well as Internet sites. As of March 2002, there have been 14,767,293 references in the media to the NBHC and over 500,000 items have been distributed to the public. This campaign is a unique public/nonprofit partnership among the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DHHS OWH, and the National Osteoporosis Foundation. As a result, many organizations and agencies have partnered with the NBHC. For example, the Girl Scouts of America have developed materials and a video for the target population.

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH CAMPAIGNS

Recognizing the devastating impact of heart disease on women, OWH continues to partner with organizations to develop programs to stem the risk of cardiovascular disease in women. Additional information on the Heart Health programs listed below is available through the National Women's Health Information Center (NWHIC) at its web site, www.4woman.gov, or its Call Center at 1-800-944-WOMAN or TDD, 1-888-220-5446.

For Your Heart, located at www.4woman.gov, is an interactive web site that uses questions to help a user analyze her current cardiovascular health behavior. Then it provides personalized stories about improving one's cardiovascular health, messages that are tailored for women of color. The messages are based on a proven theoretical model called the 5 Stages of Change (pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance).

To complement the For Your Heart web site, a notebook and home video has been developed for African-American women in collaboration with the National Black Nurses Association (NBNA). The notebook and video are entitled For Your Heart: A Guide to Healthier Living for African-American Women. In addition, a video with the NBNA has been developed to promote the For your Heart website. This video features public service announcements from Miss Virginia, who had a heart attack at the age of 17. All these tools serve as teaching aids. Nurses are provided with user-friendly health education materials about cardiovascular disease, so they can distribute them to their patients while discussing risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

OWH is in its third year of partnering with the Sister to Sister Foundation to sponsor their annual Women's Heart Day. The Foundation expanded its reach to include the American Heart Association as a national partner. Events in 2003 took place on February 21 in four cities: Washington, DC, New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Women's Heart Day is a high-energy, interactive health fair-style event with more than 40 exhibitors; free screening; healthy cooking and fitness demonstrations; children's activities; giveaways such as airline tickets and cruises; and four panel discussions on stress, heart disease, fitness and nutrition.

For the Generations project, OWH is partnering with the Association of Black Cardiologists' (ABC) Center for Women's Health to adopt a popular church-based approach to heart education that will reduce cardiovascular mortality and morbidity among women. Historically, in African-American churches, pastors' wives have played a pivotal role in the growth and nurturing of the congregation. By partnering with pastors' wives, known as the "first ladies" of the church, OWH will gain access to, and the support of, a new audience. Leaders in cardiovascular medicine and women's health, as well as ABC and OWH, will actively serve on planning committees and speakers' bureaus hosted by the "first ladies."

The program is being pilot-tested in Atlanta, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Mississippi, and Chicago, with the intention of expanding into five additional cities in 2003. Although Generations is a church-based program, it is highly adaptable to other arenas, such as African-American sororities, professional organizations, and other community-based organizations.

The Women's Health Institute of Howard University, in conjunction with OWH as a participating sponsor, recently presented a conference entitled "Health Issues and Concerns of Women of Color: A Call to Action III." This conference provided a forum for health professionals and community representatives to present relevant research, service, and prevention models on cardiovascular disease for ethnically and culturally diverse women. Conference topics included alternative therapies, culturally sensitive information on behavior/lifestyle modification, pharmacologic interventions, and strategies to reduce cardiovascular morbidity and mortality.

OWH funded two projects of the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHONN):

- the revisions of their cardiovascular guidelines, which focus on the prevention and diagnosis of heart disease in women; and

- the conducting of two train-the-trainer sessions for nurses in the application of these guidelines.

OWH supports Women Heart, an organization focused solely on women's heart health, in their efforts to develop a web-based resource for the diagnosis and treatment of heart disease in women. The program will be modeled after the National Cancer Institute's Physician Data Query system for people diagnosed with cancer. To date, no such system exists that is specifically tailored to diagnosing heart disease in women.

OWH developed a Working Group on Women's Cardiovascular Health in May 2001. The Working Group created a partnership with the American Society of Echocardiography (ASE) called "Take Charge of Your Heart Health." It seeks to educate women about heart disease, its risk factors, and the importance of early detection and proper treatment through national television and radio public service campaigns.

OWH's Working Group has also developed a partnership with the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (NHLBI) on its women's "Heart Truth" Campaign, taking an active role in supporting this effort. Training and education materials for both healthcare providers and members of the community will be disseminated. Public-service billboards and exhibits are also an integral part of the education campaign. In addition, OWH will promote the campaign through its National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health (CoEs).

OWH is also assisting NHLBI by disseminating educational materials on their Heart Attack Alert Campaign, entitled "Act in Time," through OWH's National Centers of Excellence.

EATING DISORDERS EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

OWH sponsors the BodyWise Eating Disorders Educational Campaign, which focuses on middle-school educators and health care providers. The goal of the program is to increase awareness and knowledge of eating disorders, including their signs and symptoms, steps to take when concerned about students, and ways to promote healthy eating and reduce preoccupation with weight and size. An information packet is available that includes materials emphasizing the links among healthy eating, positive body image, and favorable learning outcomes. Some materials are targeted to specific racial and ethnic groups. Information is available on the NWHIC web site (<http://www.4woman.gov>).

WWW.4GIRLS.GOV WEB SITE

OWH developed and launched a new web site, www.4girls.gov, in June 2002. Its mission is to promote healthy, positive behaviors in girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The site motivates girls to choose healthy behaviors by providing information on fitness, nutrition, stress management, relationships with friends and family, peer pressure, suicide, drugs, self-esteem, and other topics in an interactive, user-friendly format.

The web site contains the following six modules: Becoming a Woman, Fit for Life, You Are What You Eat, Mind Over Matters, Choosing Not to Use, and Putting It All Together.

The 4girls.gov web site also features a Parent/Caregiver section that provides lists of publications, organizations, and web sites that influential adults can use to help address the issues that face adolescent girls. Furthermore, the site's Disability and Chronic Illness section provides tips to help girls with disabilities cope with maturing into women while being chronically ill.

OWH plans to expand the 4girls.gov web site. New sections will be developed on negotiation skills, violence against girls, leadership skill development, depression, and obesity. These sections will target young women between the ages of 15 and 18 with health messages that are critical to nurturing healthy behaviors.

MENOPAUSE RESOURCE GUIDE

OWH has compiled and annually updates a Menopause Resource Guide that highlights federal agencies, organizations, newsletters, and books dedicated to the improvement of the health of menopausal women. It is available both from OWH and through NWHIC's website at <http://www.4woman.gov/owh/pub/factsheets/menoguide.htm>.

4. HEALTH CARE INNOVATION

NATIONAL CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

OWH has designated 19 National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health (CoEs) in academic health centers across the United States and Puerto Rico to establish and evaluate a new integrated health care system for women. The CoE model unites women's health research, medical training, clinical and preventive care, public health education, community outreach, and the promotion of women in academic medicine around a common mission: to improve the health status of women across diverse ages, races/ethnicities, and backgrounds.

OWH held its first National Forum in November 1999 to highlight the accomplishments of the CoEs, an event that was attended by representatives of nearly one-half of the nation's academic health centers.

The National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health Second National Forum was held on May 13-14, 2003. Findings from a comprehensive two-year qualitative and quantitative evaluation study were recently released. They indicated that, compared with women seen in other settings, women seen in CoE facilities are more likely to have age-appropriate preventive screenings and counseling. In FY2003, these data will be compared to similar surveys already conducted by the Veterans' Administration Women's Health Centers.

NATIONAL COMMUNITY CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

In September 2000, OWH established the National Community Centers of Excellence (CCOEs), a program designed to integrate health services at the local clinic-level and community hospital-level with research and public outreach. The CCOE model will coordinate all aspects of a woman's health throughout her lifespan, including actively managing the socioeconomic and cultural barriers that too often prevent underserved women from accessing and receiving high-quality health care.

The CCOE program provides recognition and funding for community-based programs that unite promising approaches to women's health across six components: health services delivery, particularly preventive services; training for lay workers and professional health providers; community-based research; public education and/or outreach; leadership development for women; and technical assistance to other communities that want to replicate the program. OWH has awarded 12 five-year grants to establish the National Community Centers of Excellence. Evaluation of the models established at these 12 diverse sites is underway.

CENTERS OF LEADERSHIP IN ACADEMIC MEDICINE

In response to the need for a more comprehensive national mentoring program to encourage institutional efforts in this area and to develop strategies to overcome the institutional, economic, and organizational barriers to mentoring programs, OWH established four Centers of Leadership in Academic Medicine (CoLs) in September 1998: MPC Hahnemann University School of Medicine, East Carolina University School of Medicine, Meharry Medical College School of Medicine, and the University of California at San Diego School of Medicine. The four CoLs are demonstration projects to promote gender equity in medicine and leadership advancement of junior faculty.

The CoL Program is a direct response to recommendations made by the National Task Force on Mentoring for Female Health Care Professionals, which was convened by OWH to lower career barriers traditionally faced by women in academic medicine. The Task Force was composed of representatives from health professional organizations and federal agencies, which requested the creation of a comprehensive national program. Concrete recommendations were developed to promote a national commitment to the importance of mentoring for both men and women in academic medicine. A manuscript highlighting the elements of the CoL program was published in *Academic Medicine* in 2001.

Furthermore, the CoLs have had over 120 publications and presentations since their inception. The CoLs now serve as experts on leadership, academic promotion, and mentoring. They also provide suggestions and comments to the National Centers of Excellence in Women's Health (CoEs) and other interested academic medical centers in the United States. Lessons learned have been incorporated into the 2003 performance-based contract solicitation for new Centers of Excellence.

DIRECTORY OF RESIDENCY AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMS

DHHS OWH is deeply committed to improving medical education and training for health care professionals on women's health issues. To that end, the Directory of Residency and Fellowship Programs in Women's Health was developed to foster increased awareness among the general public and health care professionals about established programs in the expanding field of post-graduate training in women's health.

For over 7 years, the Directory has been provided to medical schools and the general public upon request. Thousands of copies have been distributed nationally and internationally. To date, there are over 9 residencies and 14 fellowships in women's health. A manuscript examining the role of the federal government in these training programs has been published in the Journal of the American Medical Women's Association. Copies of the Directory are disseminated through OWH's website at <http://www.4woman.gov/owh/resfel>.

5. HEALTH DISPARITIES

MINORITY WOMEN'S HEALTH PANEL OF EXPERTS

OWH has created a Minority Women's Health Panel of Experts comprised of expert health professionals representing the African-American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Hispanic/Latina communities. This panel serves as a resource for OWH on two fronts: (1) on developing strategies that address diversity in health needs and inconsistencies in health care delivery for women across our country; and (2) for ensuring that the concerns of minority and underserved women are addressed in OWH programs and initiatives. The panel was created after a series of national conferences on the health issues of minority women, including OWH's conference, "Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Partnerships to Improve Minority Women's Health."

WOMEN'S HEALTH WORKING GROUP OF THE UNITED STATES/MEXICO BINATIONAL COMMISSION

OWH plays a pivotal role in the Women's Health Working Group of the United States/Mexico Binational Commission. The Binational Commission was established in 1981 as a forum for meetings of Cabinet-level officials from the United States and Mexico. The Women's Health Working Group first met in 1996, defining six priority areas: migrant health, tobacco/smoking prevention with an emphasis on adolescents, women's health, aging issues, substance abuse, and immunization. Staff members in OWH also maintain contact with women's health representatives in the Mexican Ministry of Health and in states bordering the United States and Mexico.

MOBILE BREAST CARE FACILITY

OWH was integral to the transfer of the mobile breast care facility from the Department of Defense to the Indian Health Service (IHS). The facility has been installed at the Tuba City, Arizona, IHS campus, where it is serving the women of the Navajo Nation. It provides comprehensive women-focused services, including digital mammography. The results of the mammographies are read in real-time by health professionals at the University of Arizona in Tucson. OWH is currently working with the Indian Health Service and outside partners on a similar model for the Aberdeen service area.

6. REGIONAL SUPPORT

OWH supports Regional Women's Health Coordinators (RWHCs) in each of the 10 regions of DHHS across the United States and its territories. The RWHCs chair regional advisory committees on women's health; advise Regional Health Administrators on women's health priorities; provide information and technical assistance; share information and resources with federal and state agencies, local communities, and the public; convene conferences and workshops; support the capacity building of minority women's organizations; and participate in local, state, regional, federal, and international activities to advance the mission of the Office on Women's Health.

More information on the Regional Women's Health Coordinators can be found on the NWHIC website at <http://www.4woman.gov/owh/reg/>.

DHHS/OWH REGIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH COORDINATORS

**Region I
(CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)**

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**Region III
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**Region IV
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**Region V
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**Region VI
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**Region VII
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**Region IX
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**Region X
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<http://www.4woman.gov/>

Last updated: October 2003