

## **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF HEALTH AND MEDICINE WELCOMES WOMEN'S HEALTH EXHIBIT**

“The Changing Face of Women’s Health,” an exhibition devoted exclusively to women’s health issues, will open Feb. 1 at the National Museum of Health and Medicine and remain through Aug. 31. It features interactive and multi-media techniques, companion programs, educator outreach materials, and a complementary website -- [www.whealth.com](http://www.whealth.com).

“This exhibit is the first major touring presentation dedicated solely to the latest scientific information about women’s health issues – one that encourages women to take charge of their health and imparts the message that it is never too early or too late to make changes for the better,” said Adrienne Noe, Ph.D., museum director.

The interactive exhibit is organized into four central themes; detection, prevention, risk, and control:

- The theme of detection uses breast disease to highlight the wide range of tests, screenings, and state-of-the-art technologies used to identify various conditions and diseases.
- The theme of prevention encourages women to take charge of their own health and weighs the trade-offs and benefits of preventive behaviors. Using osteoporosis as an example, the exhibit emphasizes how habits formed in early adolescence can impact later health
- The risk section focuses on an individual’s ability to assess and understand personal risk, illustrated through the model of cardiovascular disease, the No. 1 killer of women in the country.

- Finally, the exhibit deals with control, presenting body image as it relates to health and probing complex issues regarding body types and what is considered normal, healthy and desirable in our society.

“It examines the success stories of modern medicine, recognizes the heightened interest in women’s health, and provides a resource for people of all ages wanting to take an active hands-on role in learning more about their bodies and the vitality of their futures, “ added Dr. Noe.

“The Changing Face of Women’s Health” also examines societal pressures and patterns, attitudes toward the medical community, and personal beliefs about biology and behavior. In its resource center individuals may explore health issues in greater depth through printed materials, videos, and access to the exhibit website. The center is also a distribution point for information about local and community health resources.

The National Health Sciences Consortium, a collaborative entity of nine major-market science centers and museums, is responsible for this new effort in public health education and earned its reputation for excellence several years ago with the production of the first traveling exhibition on HIV/AIDS.

In creating the exhibit the consortium employed the assistance of a broad range of constituencies, including physicians and nurses, educators, religious representatives, social scientists, public health officials and health care providers, as well as leading research scientists and medical experts in women’s health.

“The Changing Face of Women’s Health” opened at the Maryland Science Center in Baltimore, Md., in March 1999. This is the exhibit’s sixth of 10 national venues, and following its exhibition in Washington will be on display at the Franklin Institute Science

Museum in Philadelphia, the Museum of Science in Boston, the Museum of Science & Industry in Chicago and the California Science Center in Los Angeles.

The exhibit developers embraced the concepts that women's health issues are created and shaped by biology, personal behavior, and society; that women have a high level of interest in taking charge of their own health; that this proactive approach is changing the way health studies are conducted, the way doctors and patients relate and the way research is undertaken and interpreted.

“Many advances in women's health are due to the wealth of knowledge we have gathered through continued research, enhanced education initiatives and a more proactive role in both prevention and treatment, on the part of women, the medical community and society in general,” says Jeffrey P. Koplan, M.D., M.P.H., director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, Metropolitan Life Foundation, and Pfizer Women's Health, The exhibit is sponsored at the National Museum of Health and Medicine by Howard University Hospital, WUSA-TV, and Bonneville International Corporation and its radio stations WGMS-FM, WTOP-AM and FM, and WWZZ-FM.