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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SFDPH DISTRIBUTES VITAMINS TO SAN FRANCISCO WOMEN

SAN FRANCISCO—Clinics around the city recently began distributing free multi-vitamins to women as part of a campaign sponsored by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Section.

The Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project, which started October 24, is aimed at women in San Francisco ages 14 to 44. The campaign is intended to inform women know about a vitamin distribution program underway in the city and to educate about the importance of getting adequate folic acid in their diets. The Go Folic! Vitamin Distribution Program is in effect at clinics throughout the city (including six DPH Community Health Programs for Youth Clinics as well as City College's Student Health Services); participating facilities offer every female client a year's supply of free multi-vitamins that meet the daily requirement for folic acid.

The Go Folic! Campaign includes a viral marketing component intended to get the word out to San Francisco's youth community. Go Folic! is poised to utilize MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and similar networks to involve its target audience in the folic acid discussion.

According to Shivaun Nestor, Go Folic! Project Coordinator, "This project is important because folic acid is a B vitamin that is necessary for cell division and growth and that plays a crucial role in women's health. Folic acid supplementation may decrease a woman's risk for breast, cervical and colon cancer. In addition, it has been shown to support heart health and can be viewed as 'beauty from the inside out' as it improves the quality of a woman's hair, skin and nails. Also, if a woman has been taking folic acid before she becomes pregnant, it greatly decreases her risk for having a baby with a neural tube defect and may reduce the risk of early pre-term labor."

Michael Baxter, Director of SFDPH Community Health Programs for Youth, whose clinics serve young women up to age 24, states, "We are excited to participate in the Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project. Teenage and adult women need at least 400 mcg of folic acid daily for optimum health. However, we know that it can be difficult to get this amount, since the body only absorbs about 50% of the folate a woman gets from food. That's why so many health experts recommend taking a daily multi-vitamin with the RDA for folic acid. However, good supplements can be expensive. It's wonderful to be able to offer a good multi-vitamin formula to our clients for free."

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High school and college journalists who publish articles about the Go Folic! Women's Nutrition Project in their school newspapers by will be eligible to enter a student journalism contest. Journalists will be competing at the high school or college level for one of three cash prizes: First Place, \$150; Second Place, \$100; Third Place, \$50. Winning articles will also be posted on the Go Folic! website and in the campaign's blog. High school articles will also be posted on the campaign's MySpace page; college articles will appear on Facebook.

The SFDPH Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Section's mission is to promote the health and well being of women of childbearing age, infants, children and adolescents who are at increased risk of adverse health outcomes by virtue of financial, language or cultural barriers. The Go Folic! Project is made possible by a grant from the Vitamin Cases Consumer Settlement Fund. Created as a result of an antitrust class action, one of the purposes of the Fund is to improve the health and nutrition of California consumers.

For more information about the contest, or to schedule an interview with the Go Folic! Campaign team, please contact Mikael Wagner at 415.786.0428 or Shivaun Nestor at 415.575.5677.

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