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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **TEENS GO FOLIC! FOR NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The San Francisco Department of Public Health’s Go Folic! Women’s Nutrition Project, together with Community Health Programs for Youth, is sponsoring a teen event at Balboa High School in honor of National Nutrition Month. The American Dietetic Association observes National Nutrition Month every March in an effort to focus public awareness on the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise.

The Go Folic! Project provides free multi-vitamins containing 800 mcg of folic acid to women in San Francisco ages 14 to 44. The project includes a public awareness campaign intended to let women know about the vitamin distribution program and to educate them 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 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.

On Thursday, March 11, teens will gather at Balboa High School during their lunch hour to learn more about the importance of folic acid. The event will feature snack boxes with folate-rich food, music from the KMEL van, a game with prizes, and interviews with students and staff from Balboa Teen Health Center, one of the sites distributing Go Folic! Multi-Vitamins.

Shivaun Nestor, Go Folic! Project Coordinator, is excited about this opportunity to get the word out to high school-aged women. She explains that folic acid—a B vitamin—is necessary for cell division and growth, and plays a crucial role in young women’s health. “Getting adequate folic acid may support heart health and decrease a woman’s risk for breast, cervical and colon cancer,” she says.

Adds Kim Tucker, Nurse Manager at Balboa Teen Health Center, “One of the main selling points about folic acid for young women is that it improves the quality of our hair, nails and skin. And it’s never too early to get into healthy habits. Many of the young women who see us will want to start families one day. And if a woman has been taking folic acid at least 3 months before she becomes pregnant, it greatly reduces her risk of having a baby with a neural tube defect. Taking it a year before conception may also reduce the risk of pre-term or early labor.”

Michael Baxter, Director of Community Health Programs for Youth, points out that busy students often find it difficult to eat well—and to purchase expensive supplements. For these reasons, it can be difficult for young women to get the 400 mcg of folic acid they need every day. “That’s why it’s so fortunate that we’re able to provide young women in

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San Francisco with a good multi-vitamin formula free of charge,” he says.

The Go Folic! Women’s Nutrition Project is dedicated to improving the health of San Francisco women through education and vitamin distribution. 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 Go Folic! Women’s Nutrition Project, or to schedule an interview with the Go Folic! team; please contact Mikael Wagner at 415.255.0800 or via email at [bmikael@promotionswest.com](mailto:bmikael@promotionswest.com).