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SFCC GOES FOLIC! DISRIBUTING VITAMINS TO YOUNG WOMEN

SAN FRANCISCO – This week, San Francisco City College’s Student Health Services began distributing free multi-vitamins to female students as part of a campaign sponsored by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH) Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health Section.

The Go Folic! Women’s Nutrition Project, which started October 1, 2009, is aimed at women in San Francisco ages 14 to 44. The project distributes free multi-vitamins with and works to educate women about the health benefits of getting adequate folic acid in their diets. The Go Folic! Vitamin Distribution Program, which will eventually be citywide, is currently offering vitamins 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.

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

City College clinicians were eager to participate in the vitamin giveaway, knowing that busy students often find it difficult to eat well—and to purchase expensive supplements. Paula Cahill, Department Chair of Student Health Services, says, “It can be hard for young women to get the 400 mcg of folic acid they need every day, especially because studies show that the body only absorbs about half of the folate a woman gets from her food. Health experts now recommend taking a daily multi-vitamin with the RDA for folic acid. That’s why we’re thrilled to be able to provide our students with a good multi-vitamin formula for free.”

Clinicians at Student Health Services will offer a year’s supply of free multi-vitamins to every female visitor.

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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! Campaign, or to schedule an interview with the Go Folic! campaign team, please contact Mikael Wagner at 415.786.0428 or via email at bmikael@promotionswest.com.