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A HEALTHY MAKEOVER IN 2004—4GIRLS.gov Emphasizes the Importance of Girls' Health

Washington D.C. – U.S. teens are more likely to consume soda and fried foods, and exercise less than their global teen counterparts. Chronic diseases associated with obesity such as diabetes are now seen in young people. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services', Office on Women's Health (OWH) is committed to increasing overall health and fitness awareness as well as the development of healthy lifestyles among girls. To meet these goals, OWH has created a new and improved web site for girls, www.4girls.gov.

The 4GIRLS Health site features interactive tools, such as a 'Speak Up' forum for girls, in order to engage young women to take proactive steps towards a healthy lifestyle early on in life. It is vital to instill health promoting behaviors in girls during teen years as they grow into adulthood. The 4GIRLS site provides valuable information about preventative measures teen girls can take against the onset of various diseases as they grow older.

When asked about one health issues she feels is important to teen girls today, Dr. Wanda Jones, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Health {Women's Health} said, "Having respect for your body. Everything from how you treat your body, how you care for it, how you work for it, not poisoning it.... all come from having respect for your body."

The site makeover was based on the opinions of a newly developed *Sounding Board*, a diverse group of nine young women throughout the United States who have demonstrated leadership and enthusiasm in young women's health. The group's main goal is to provide feedback to OWH regarding the 4GIRLS Health web site and other adolescent women's health initiatives. They share their thoughts about 4GIRLS and health issues they think are important to teen girls.

The mission of 4GIRLS.gov is to promote healthy, positive behaviors in girls between the ages of 10 and 16. The site, originally launched in 2002, gives girls current, reliable, and useful information on various health issues they will face as they become young women, and tips on handling relationships with family and friends, at school, and at home.

4Girls.gov is sponsored by DHHS, Office on Women's Health. For information about *Girls' Health*, visit www.4girls.gov or call the National Women's Health Information Center at 1-800-994-9662.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health