

Contact - John Garrett - (818) 760-7635



## **For Grace to Co-Host First Annual Women in Pain Conference With City of Hope and Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative**

*Conference to Focus on the Gender Inequalities in the Treatment of Pain*

*Groundbreaking Event to Bring Together Physicians, Patients and Policymakers*

LOS ANGELES (Feb. 5, 2008) -- For Grace, a nonprofit dedicated to ensuring the ethical and equal treatment of all women in pain, today announced it will launch Women in Pain: Gender Matters, a conference that will focus on the gender inequalities in the treatment and research of pain. The first annual conference will be held on May 30 in Duarte at the City of Hope Medical Center. City of Hope ([www.cityofhope.org](http://www.cityofhope.org)) and Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative ([sccpi.coh.org](http://sccpi.coh.org)) are co-sponsors of the event.

Women in Pain: Gender Matters will focus on the disparities in treatment and research toward women in pain, traditional and alternative therapies for pain control, legal and regulatory issues in chronic pain management, and the role of the interdisciplinary team in cancer and pain. In what is believed to be a first for a pain-related conference, health care providers and women in pain will attend lectures and workshops together.

According to the National Institutes of Health, research has shown that women experience more pain than men and are more prone to chronic pain disorders such as fibromyalgia, pelvic pain and rheumatoid arthritis. But women are less likely to receive treatment due to cultural, economic and political barriers. In fact, many women around the world report that their pain is often dismissed by medical professionals who don't take their complaints seriously.

"Over the last several years, there has been a tremendous emphasis on raising awareness of pain issues affecting women. We created this conference to bring a high level of thinking and analysis to this issue and to educate the public, health care providers, advocacy organizations and the government about the lack of diagnosis and adequate treatment of chronic pain in women," said Cynthia Toussaint, founder of For Grace and a chronic pain sufferer herself.

This pilot conference also will feature a dramatization of the typical doctor-patient relationship and demonstrations of various creative arts therapies. Lisa Lynne, a world class Celtic harpist who is the founder of the Harps for Hearts music therapy program at City of Hope, will lead a music therapy breakout session. For Grace also will premiere their new public service announcement that features actor Jack Coleman, one of the stars of NBC's hit show, *Heroes*.

To mark the day, legislators including California State Senator Sheila Kuehl, Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Los Angeles City Councilmember Wendy Greuel, will officially proclaim May 30, 2008 to be known as "Women In Pain Awareness Day."

This year's conference will feature a national panel of expert speakers, including:

- Mary Bennett, MFA, Director of Mobilization, American Pain Foundation
- David Bresler, PhD, LAc, The Bresler Center
- Denise Dador, Anchor/Health Specialist, ABC7 News
- Tim Dauwalder, DO, Medical Director, VNA Hospice of Southern California
- Karin Davalos, MA, Commissioner, Los Angeles County Commission for Women
- Betty Ferrell, PhD, FAAN, Research Scientist, City of Hope
- Diane Hoffman, JD, MS, Law Professor, University of Maryland
- Kathe Kelly, RN, BSN, OCN, Director, Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative
- Kate Kravits, RN, MA, Senior Research Specialist, City of Hope
- Pamela Merriam, MSN, ANP, OCN, Nurse Practitioner, USC Norris Cancer Society
- Mindy Meyer, MA, Organizational Consultant

- Shirley Otis-Green, LCSW, Senior Research Specialist, City of Hope
- Judy Paice, PhD, RN, FAAN, President, American Pain Society
- Steven Richeimer, MD, Chief of the Division of Pain Medicine, University of Southern California
- Cynthia Toussaint, Founder & Spokesperson, For Grace
- Gail Williamson, Executive Director, Down's Syndrome Association of Los Angeles, Inc.

Attendees are expected to include physicians, nurses, pharmacists, social workers, lawmakers, women in pain and many others dedicated to the awareness of chronic pain issues affecting women.

For more information about the 2008 Women in Pain conference, please visit <http://www.forgrace.org> or call (818) 760-7635.

To register, please visit the Southern California Cancer Pain Initiative web site at <http://sccpi.coh.org/WIP/WIP8.htm>.