PRESS RELEASE

Planning ahead: having the healthiest baby possible
Supplement on preconception care now available online

Heidelberg/White Plains, NY, 18 September 2006

Women who improve their own health before pregnancy have a better chance of delivering a robust, healthy baby. Three important measures include:

- Managing conditions such as diabetes, hypothyroidism, inherited disorders, obesity, sexually transmitted diseases, and oral health
- Protecting one’s health through supplements such as folic acid, vaccinations for Rubella, Hepatitis B, and screening for HIV
- Avoiding alcohol, anti-epileptic drugs, acne-controlling medicines, oral anticoagulants and smoking

More information on these and other measures are now freely accessible online in a special Supplement to the Maternal and Child Health Journal, published by Springer. The Supplement provides everything that health care specialists and the public need to know about the importance of women’s health and health care before pregnancy. Dr. Jennifer L. Howse, president of the March of Dimes and a co-author of the lead article of the Supplement, said, “The greatest opportunities for improving the health of mothers and babies lie in prevention strategies implemented before conception.”

Dr. Hani Atrash, co-editor of the Supplement and associate director for program development at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, said, “It is not enough to worry about a pregnant woman’s health only during her pregnancy or a child’s health only after his or her birth, because many of the factors that contribute to the mother’s and child’s health can be identified and often successfully managed before pregnancy.”

Bill Tucker, Executive Editor at Springer, said, “In order to ensure that this important information reaches a wider public, the Supplement has been made available on our online platform SpringerLink, free of charge, to anyone.” The Supplement can be viewed at http://springerlink.com/content/k33g85g4242v/?p=5e9442a6c00a40888ebe95936e50a&pi=4.

The Supplement on Preconception Care: Science, Practice, Challenges and Opportunities includes the first-ever collection of articles on preconception care, covering a wide range of topics including policy, practice, and domestic and international programs, as well as knowledge, attitudes, and practices of health care professionals. It also includes articles which discuss the science behind the ten national recommendations issued earlier this year by the CDC to improve the health of women before they become pregnant. Articles in the Supplement were written by experts from CDC, March of Dimes, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and several other national organizations.

About CDC
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national, and international organizations. For more information, visit www.cdc.gov.

About the March of Dimes
The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality. Founded in 1938, the March of Dimes funds programs of research, community services, education, and advocacy to save babies and in 2003 launched a campaign to address the increasing rate of premature birth. For more information, visit the March of Dimes Web site at marchofdimes.com or its Spanish language Web site at nacersano.org.

About Springer

Springer Science+Business Media is one of the world’s leading suppliers of scientific and specialist literature. It is the second-largest publishing group in the science, technology, and medicine (STM) sector and the largest business-to-business publisher in the German-language area. The group owns 70 publishing houses, together publishing a total of 1,450 journals and more than 5,000 new books a year. The group operates in over 20 countries in Europe, the USA, and Asia, and has some 5,000 employees. In 2005, it generated annual sales of around EUR 838 million. For more information, visit www.springer.com.

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