



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, September 28, 2006

## **Tommy Thompson Visits Nashville to Speak About the Importance of Men's Prevention and Wellness Programs**

### ***Former HHS Secretary and Wisconsin Governor Addresses Need For Healthier Lifestyles at Tennessee Symposium on Men's Health***

September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Nashville, TN – Former Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary and Wisconsin Governor, Tommy Thompson, visited Nashville today to speak about the importance of and need for preventive care services. Secretary Thompson addressed attendees at the Tennessee Symposium on Men's Health, sponsored by the Men's Health Network, encouraging individuals to engage in healthier lifestyles and employers to invest in wellness programs.

"As a matter of economic, health and personal policy, we must do all that we can to promote the cause of prevention," said Secretary Thompson. "The first and best way to improve people's health and reduce health care costs is to keep them from getting sick in the first place. This is a cause I adopted as HHS Secretary and one that I continue to advance."

Tennessee is a key state in the quest to broaden knowledge about and uptake of preventive care services among men. In 2004, the United Health Foundation Study ranked Tennessee 48<sup>th</sup> among 50 states for indicators such as high cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.

"We welcome Secretary Thompson and are honored to have him address the Tennessee Symposium on Men's Health today," said Scott Williams, Director, Professional Relations & Public Policy, Men's Health Network. "Nationwide we are facing an emergency in health care, and it is one that can be avoided. Here in Tennessee men die at a higher rate than the national average from some of the major causes of death including heart attack, cancer, respiratory disease and diabetes. We agree with the Secretary when he says that healthier lifestyles can help men avoid these diseases earlier and live longer, happier lives."

The Tennessee Symposium on Men's Health is part of a series of state symposia on men's health held around the country to educate health professionals and the public-at-large about significant men's health issues. The symposium brings together local, regional, and state public health department officials, state policy leaders, patient and medical associations/organizations, elected officials, and healthcare professionals and leaders as they deal with the challenges of our current healthcare system. This

symposium is focused on smoking cessation, mental health services, cardiovascular treatment, STD/HIV management, cancer, obesity, diabetes, arthritis and aging.

In his speech, Secretary Thompson also addressed the role employers can take in promoting healthier lifestyles. "All businesses, large and small, should encourage their employees to take better care of themselves," said Secretary Thompson. "Businesses should work together with their insurance companies to structure benefit programs which encourage employees to adopt healthier eating and exercising habits, and reward those who lead healthy lives. Switching our focus from treating illness to preventing it will help build a stronger, healthier America."

###

***Tommy Thompson**, the former Health and Human Services secretary and four-term governor of Wisconsin, is a partner at the law firm of Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld, LLP, and is the independent chairman of the new Deloitte Center for Health Care Solutions. In his role at the Center, Secretary Thompson is partnering with some of the world's foremost experts to develop innovative solutions to the health care challenges facing American families, businesses, communities, states and the nation as a whole. His appearance today is sponsored by Pfizer Inc.*

***Men's Health Network (MHN)** is a non-profit educational organization comprised of physicians, researchers, public health workers, individuals and other health professionals. MHN is committed to improving the health and wellness of men through education campaigns, partnerships with retailers and other private entities, workplace health programs, data collection, and work with health care providers to provide better programs and funding for men's health needs.*