

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Website Offers Health Education in American Sign Language**

Westminster, MD [September 26, 2008] – People who are Deaf and hard of hearing now have a place to learn more about various health topics in their native language of American Sign Language (ASL). [www.DeafMD.org](http://www.DeafMD.org) was launched today with the purpose of providing health education in ASL to promote the overall wellness of this vastly underserved population. “Our mission is to provide clear and concise health information in ASL to promote the overall wellness of the Deaf and hard of hearing community,” said Casey Davis, DeafMD.org founder.

Recognizing the need of a unbiased, online health resource that Deaf and hard of hearing people could turn to when they had medical questions, DeafMD.org worked in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and National Institutes for Health to provide this crucial information. The information was evaluated by a team of linguists, medical professionals, and educators, and then translated into ASL.

Visitors to DeafMD.org can search an online list of diseases, illnesses, medical tests, and current news events, with each page providing a clear, easy to understand video translation of the selected topic. Additionally, DeafMD.org is compiling a list of “Deaf-friendly doctors” – medical professionals who meet criteria in satisfactorily serving Deaf and hard of hearing people. To be included on this list, medical providers must be deaf or sign ASL fluently, at least one member of the provider’s staff must be deaf or be fluent in ASL, the provider’s office must use video relay services for phone calls, and hire qualified interpreters for office visits as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Specialties include mental health providers, physical therapists, and primary care physicians, along with many others.

Another feature of this innovative website is an e-newsletter, which allows registered individuals to receive e-mail updates when new information is posted onto the site. There is no charge to use DeafMD.org, although the site is dependent upon donations to keep it running. “We would not want to hinder access to this vital information simply because someone cannot afford to pay for it. We hope to benefit the entire Deaf population, regardless of socioeconomic status,” said Davis.

DeafMD.org will also be shown live at DeafNation expos in San Francisco and New York this fall, and will tentatively participate in the 2009 DeafNation tour of 14 cities across the United States. For more, check [www.DeafMD.org](http://www.DeafMD.org), or e-mail [contactus@deafmd.org](mailto:contactus@deafmd.org).

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