City of Philadelphia

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor
Mark McDonald, Press Secretary

Tuesday, March 15, 2011 **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

MAYOR NUTTER RECEIVES REPORT FROM DHS COMMUNITY OVERSIGHT BOARD

Mayor also appoints new members to Board

Philadelphia, March 15, 2011—Mayor Nutter received the Community Oversight Board's (COB) 2011 report and announced the appointment of five new COB members. The COB is charged with monitoring the progress of reforms at the Department of Human Services (DHS). The report notes the Department's steady progress toward implementing the 37 reforms recommended by the Child Welfare Review Panel (CWRP).

The COB, which was reestablished by Mayor Nutter in January of 2008, provides annual progress reports to the Mayor that detail DHS reform initiatives. The COB's 11 members include two appointed by the Council President and nine appointed by the Mayor. All members are recognized for their child welfare expertise or represent critical stakeholder interests. The COB is responsible for monitoring DHS progress in its reform efforts and for making recommendations to improve policy and practice. At least twice a year, the COB provides the Mayor and the public with a report outlining its findings on DHS' progress on reform implementation.

Of the 37 recommendations made in the 2011 COB Report, more than half of the recommended reforms outlined in the report have been implemented or are ongoing initiatives. DHS is moving toward full implementation of an additional ten COB recommendations that are currently in-progress.

"The COB has been vigilant in its efforts to improve DHS' ability to ensure the safety, permanency and well being of Philadelphia's vulnerable children and youth," Mayor Nutter said. "The City thanks the COB and the DHS for their collaboration toward improving the services delivered to families across Philadelphia."

In the report, the COB noted that "DHS has significantly increased its compliance for conducting monthly visits with children younger than five years old" and that in September 2010, DHS attained 95 percent compliance. Since that time, DHS has continued to maintain compliance at 94 to 95 percent."

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The report shared highlights from COB focus group studies that were conducted in June, 2010 to better understand the impact of reforms practices at DHS. The feedback from focus group participants noted DHS' transparency efforts: "we observed that DHS had become a more open Agency at the administrative level, with more emphasis on communicating and coordinating with their service partners." The report notes that "DHS reforms of the last three years had led to increased child safety and to improved fairness in the decision-making process for families."

COB Chairman, David Sanders said, "We commend the strong leadership of Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose and Mayor Nutter. The report documents the consistent improvements to keep the children of Philadelphia safe, however, the work continues."

As part of the ongoing reform effort, Mayor Nutter issued an Executive Order terminating the Child Welfare Advisory Board (CWAB) and transferring its regulatory functions to the COB. The Mayor also announced the appointment of five new members to the COB: Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode, Sr., Linda M. Mauro, Judith Silver, Ph.D, Charles A. Williams III, PhD and Phyllis Stevens.

BIOS:

Rev. Dr. W. Wilson Goode is Director and organizer of the nationally acclaimed Amachi Program, a national faith-based mentoring model for children of incarcerated parents. Because of his innovative and ground-breaking work, in 2006, Dr. Goode received two prestigious awards: the Civic Ventures $100,000 *Purpose Prize*, and the Philadelphia Inquirer's *Citizen of the Year.* He is an ordained Baptist Minister with 54 years of service at the First Baptist Church of Paschall located in southwest Philadelphia.

Linda M. Mauro is a Professor of Social Work at Temple University College of Health Professions/School of Social Work. Ms. Mauro has a Doctorate of social work from the University of Pennsylvania, School of Social Work and has researched and published extensively on Child Welfare issues.

Judith A. Silver, Ph.D. is a pediatric psychologist at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, where she is Co-Director of *Safe Place: The Center for Child Protection and Health*, which integrates pediatric child abuse and foster care initiatives at the hospital in clinical care, assessment, education, advocacy, and research. Between 1993-2007 she directed the *Starting Young Program*, a pediatric developmental evaluation program for young Philadelphia children under 3 who had open DHS cases.

Charles A. Williams III, PhD, an educational psychologist, is a member of the American Psychological Association (APA), American Counseling Association (ACA), and the Association for Assessment in Counseling in Education. He is currently employed at the Goodwin College of Professional Studies at Drexel University where he is an assistant clinical professor in the School of Education and director of the Center for the Prevention of School-Aged Violence.

Phyllis Stevens is founder and Executive Director of Together as Adoptive Parents, Inc. (TAP) a non-profit, multi-racial adoptive, foster and kinship parent group in Montgomery and Philadelphia County. Phyllis and her husband Derek adopted four children from foster care with special needs. She conducts numerous trainings and presentations on issues such as parent leadership, adoption subsidies, post-adoption/permanent services, special needs adoption, cultural competency, recruitment and retention, and support group development.

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