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**Department of Public Welfare Settles Lawsuit:
Agrees to Provide Appropriate Services for Pennsylvanians with
Intellectual Disabilities**

Philadelphia, PA (August 3, 2010) – The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare has agreed to settle a lawsuit filed by Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania on behalf of over 60 Pennsylvanians with intellectual disabilities who were being inappropriately housed in state psychiatric hospitals. The original complaint, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, alleged that the Department of Public Welfare violated the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act by unnecessarily segregating the plaintiffs in state psychiatric hospitals. The complaint also alleged violations of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution by failing to provide constitutionally adequate treatment for these residents.

The announced settlement, subject to the approval of the court, provides for the following:

- Defendants will request funding to provide community mental retardation services to all class members over the next three years;
- Staff at the state psychiatric hospitals will receive comprehensive training in the appropriate treatment of individuals with dual diagnoses of mental illness and intellectual disabilities; and
- Staff at the state psychiatric hospitals will be required to adhere to a comprehensive protocol with respect to the treatment of individuals with dual diagnoses (from assessments to treatment plan development and evaluation, to behavioral approaches) and with respect to discharge planning.

“The Department of Public Welfare has agreed to request the necessary funding from the Governor to address the needs of these residents over the next three years,” says Robert Meek, attorney at Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania. “With the implementation of the discharge process, staff training and treatment protocol, we are confident that individuals with intellectual

disabilities who are confined in state psychiatric hospitals, now and in the future, will receive appropriate mental health treatment and will be promptly discharged.”

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania works to advance, protect, and advocate for the human, civil, and legal rights of Pennsylvanians with disabilities. For more information, visit www.drnpa.org.

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