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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio Receives Three-Year Federal Grant for Autism Project

Columbus - A federal grant was awarded this week to the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) to implement a collaborative project for improving services for children and youth with autism. The project, *REAL* Action in Ohio, will be completely funded by the federal grant, with \$243,092 allotted this year and an estimated \$300,000 each of the next two years. The *REAL* Action in Ohio project brings together a partnership to work collectively to improve information about, and access to, comprehensive, coordinated health care and related services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities and their families.

This is really exciting news that comes at a very critical time," said John Martin, Director of DODD. "Autism Spectrum Disorder is now considered one of the fastest growing developmental disabilities that can cause impairment in socialization, communication and behavior. We are very fortunate not only for the grant award, but also to have an innovative partnership of organizations and dedicated leaders to help fulfill this project and empower Ohio's youth with autism and their families."

About the grant: The award is a *State Implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Other Developmental Disabilities*. The grant, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, will support the Ohio project for a three-year period, beginning September 2011 and ending August 2014.

A fact sheet on the project and the partnership is enclosed.

FACT SHEET

Ohio's State Implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

Project Name

REAL Action in Ohio: Resources, Education, Alignment, and Linkages

Project Purpose

Project partners will work together to: (1) create practical *resources* to empower and educate families to navigate Ohio's complex system of services; (2) increase access to early intervention services in resource-poor areas of the state through an innovative Tele-health approach; (3) enhance *educational opportunities* for medical students and residents to better prepare the next generation of pediatricians and physicians to recognize the early signs of autism for appropriate diagnosis and care; and (4) *align* services and build *linkages* that support children as they move through important life transitions.

Project Partnership

Led by the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities and in coordination with Ohio's Interagency Work Group on Autism, the partners to spearhead the work of the project will include:

- Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence
- Ohio Department of Health (Ohio's Title V Program)
- Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
- Family Child Learning Center/Akron Children's Hospital
- Ohio's two University Centers of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities/LEND Programs (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities) at both the Nisonger Center at The Ohio State University and the Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center/University of Cincinnati
- Nationwide Children's Hospital (a member of the Autism Treatment Network)
- Ohio Autism Coalition (a collaboration of autism support and advocacy groups statewide)

Project Funding

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration: State Implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children and Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Other Developmental Disabilities. The grant awards \$243,092 for the first year and an estimated \$300,000 each of the next two years, pending availability of federal funds.

Project Implementation

September 2011 through August 2014