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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: October 16, 2008
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**NEVADA'S PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT PLAN
FOR CHILD WELFARE APPLAUDED**

Carson City—Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Director Mike Willden announced today that his office has received a letter from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), informing his agency that its Program Improvement Plan (PIP) aimed at increasing child welfare safety has been successfully completed and all goals met.

A letter dated October 1, 2008, from Daniel C. Schneider, Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, to Willden states:

"Once again, congratulations on the successful completion of the Nevada PIP. ACF commends the work of the staff of the Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Child and Family Services...Nevada's staff has exemplified dedication and commitment to improving safety, permanency and well-being for the State's children and families."

Willden said, "This good news for the children of Nevada can be attributed to many individuals and groups, including the support our efforts have received from Governor Gibbons and the 2007 Legislature. Further, I want to compliment our Division of Child Family Services staff who, despite the demands of system-wide restructuring, including administrative and organizational changes to move from a bifurcated child welfare system to a State administered system, have worked diligently and effectively with the Clark County Department of Family Services and Washoe County Social Services to improve outcomes for children in the child welfare system."

Nevada's PIP was originally based on the results of the State's 2004 Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). The Plan was later amended in September 2007 to include 10 new action steps and 73 new benchmarks following the publication of the Independent Child Death Review Panel relating to child welfare in Clark County.

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This renegotiation led to the addition of ten new action steps and 73 benchmarks targeted at improving child welfare practice and systemic issues. The State's progress was monitored and reviewed by ACF using the data contained in the State's quarterly reports. Having concluded their review, ACF's Children's Bureau determined that the State successfully completed all actions steps and benchmarks associated with the renegotiated PIP, and all associated fiscal penalties, assessed at a minimum of \$368,955 for this level of non-conformity, have been rescinded.

Willden added, "the renegotiated PIP reflects the State's commitment to and prioritization of child safety statewide. In partnership with the Governor's Office, State Legislature, county child welfare agencies, and children's advocates, we can meet and exceed the objectives outlined in the PIP, thus providing the children under the supervision of child welfare agencies in our State with the services they deserve and need."

NOTE: The letter from the U.S. DHHS, ACF can be viewed at <http://www.dcss.state.nv.us/>, in the "Hot Topics" box.