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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Commissioners Proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month

Cumberland County, PA – At their public meeting today, the Cumberland County Commissioners will proclaim April as Child Abuse Prevention Month in an effort to raise awareness of a problem that often goes unrecognized in our communities. Focusing on ways to build and promote the protective factors, in every interaction with children and families, is one of the most important things the County can do to prevent child maltreatment and promote optimal child development. In addition to issuing a Proclamation, the Commissioners will also highlight the work of two County agencies that work on behalf of child victims of abuse and/or neglect – the County’s Children & Youth Services Department and the Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Program.

Twenty-three pieces of legislation were recently enacted, changing how Pennsylvania responds to child abuse. These changes significantly impact the reporting, investigation, assessment, prosecution and judicial handling of child abuse and neglect cases. This legislation includes requirements of Mandated Reporters and clearances. Mandated Reporters are those who come into direct contact with children in the course of their employment, occupation, practice of a profession or as a volunteer in a regularly scheduled program, activity or service. By law, Mandated Reporters are required to report suspected child abuse and failure to do so can range from a misdemeanor of the second degree or a felony of the second degree. The County has taken measures to ensure these new requirements are met by all County employees who meet the criteria for Mandated Reporting, clearances, or both. A policy has been implemented for all those who meet the criteria to complete their trainings and/or certifications by the deadlines in the legislation.

Also, in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Children’s Memorial flag will fly at Veterans’ Square at the end of April. This flag, sponsored by the Child Welfare League of America, is flown to direct attention to the tragedy of violent child deaths as part of a national initiative to reduce child mortality. The flag is a simple, moving image – a red field depicting blue, paper-doll-like figures of children holding hands. In the center, the white chalk outline of a missing child symbolizes the children lost to violence.

For additional information about Cumberland County Children & Youth Services and the CASA Program visit the County’s website at www.ccpa.net. For information specific to Mandated Reporting visit the County’s website at www.ccpa.net/mandatedreporting, or visit the State’s Keep Kids Safe website at www.KeepKidsSafe.pa.gov for additional information on child abuse protection and how to report suspected cases of child abuse.

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