COLORADO RECEIVES $22 MILLION TO IMPROVE LONG-TERM CARE SYSTEMS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DENVER – February 24, 2011 – The Department of Health Care Policy and Financing has received a $22 million "Money Follows the Person" grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to improve the long-term care system. Colorado's program is called CO-ACTS.

The federal grant will assist Colorado in improving the infrastructure of home and community-based services for people of all ages with long-term care needs and support them to successfully return to the community from institutional care. The vision of CO-ACTS is to transform long-term care services and support from institutionally-based and provider-driven care, to person-centered and community-based care.

"CO-ACTS is the solution for giving clients needing long-term care services independence, choice and dignity," states Sue Birch, executive director. "In order to support our clients in receiving the care they need in the setting they deserve, we will build upon our existing community-based services and, at the same time, save the state money."

"CO-ACTS is a multi-agency effort. We have been working with the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health and Environment, the Department of Transportation and the Department of Local Affairs to ensure that we have the appropriate community-based long term care services and supports in place along with housing and transportation. All of these state agencies are working together to make certain that we have a strong safety-net for those individuals returning to the community," states Tim Cortez, project director.

The Department will target individuals in nursing homes and intensive care facilities for the developmentally disabled and psychiatric hospitals. We will recruit clients who have an interest in returning to the community and have the potential, which includes a strong support network – family, friends, and neighbors –and access to the appropriate community supports. The Department's goal is to transition approximately 500 people or more back to the community over the next five years.

Medicaid is public health insurance for low-income families, children, pregnant women, the elderly and people with disabilities. Eligibility is based on income and family size. The program is funded jointly by a federal-state partnership and is administered by the Department.

About the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing: The department administers the Medicaid and Child Health Plan *Plus* programs as well as a variety of other

programs for Colorado's low-income, elderly and people with disabilities. The mission of the department is to improve access to cost-effective, quality health care services for Coloradans. For more information about the department, please visit Colorado.gov/hcpf.

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