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NEWS RELEASE



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Citizen Review Panel to hold town hall meeting Oct 27

First in a series of town hall meetings to gather information on the child protection system

(Anchorage, Alaska) – The Citizen Review Panel (CRP), as part of the Children’s Justice Act Task Force, will hold the first in a series of town hall meetings on Wednesday Oct. 27 at the Wasilla High School Theater, beginning at 6:30 pm. “The Citizen Review Panel is hosting these meetings to gather information on how the child protection system is working in communities around the state,” said Bridget Crawford, Program Coordinator for the Citizen Review Panel. “We are beginning these Town Hall meetings in the Mat-Su Valley.”

“The CRP has a statutory responsibility to obtain public input,” said Marcia Kennai, DHSS Deputy Commissioner of the Office of Children’s Services. “The town hall meetings are also an opportunity to provide information and education to the community about the child protection system. OCS, Public Safety, and Children’s Advocacy Centers will each make brief presentations at the Mat-Su town hall meeting.”

The Citizen Review Panel is a requirement of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). The Panel, independent of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and Office of Children’s Services, examines the policies, procedures and practices of state and local agencies and, where appropriate, specific cases.

“This Panel evaluates the extent to which State and local child protection system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities,” said Crawford. “One of our principal responsibilities is to provide the means for public outreach and comment, so that we can assess the effectiveness of current procedures and practices for children and families across the state. That is the purpose of these town hall meetings.”

The CRP will prepare an annual report summarizing its activities, including recommendations to improve the child protection services system at the state and local levels. Future town hall meetings will be held in conjunction with Children’s Justice Act Task Force meetings, scheduled for February 2005, in Juneau, and April 2005, in Anchorage. [Specific times and locations of the town hall meetings will be announced in the future.] A town hall meeting will also be scheduled for Bethel in May 2005.

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For more information, please contact

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