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PRESS RELEASE

IOWA LEADERS RECOMMEND PLAN TO PREVENT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE *State's Task Force Identifies Model Policy and Goals for Review by Legislators*

Des Moines, IA – The 2011 Iowa Legislature established a task force of legislators and professionals, which met the last half of 2011 to develop a plan to prevent child sexual abuse in Iowa. The legislature's first-ever child sexual abuse prevention task force discussed improvements to be made in laws and school policies to protect children. Prevent Child Abuse Iowa was chosen to lead the broad-based group of experts in child sexual abuse and prevention.

The group made several recommendations for legislative action based on the elements deemed most likely to prevent child sexual abuse – education for parents and adults and an emphasis on the responsibility of adults to protect children. Some of the proposed steps include:

- Amend Iowa's mandatory reporter law to address the need for more frequent, informative, profession-specific, and effective training for mandatory reporters
- Add clergy to the list of professionals who are mandatory reporters—while acknowledging the issue of the confidentiality of penitential communications
- Provide funding to support a new series of trainings and public education activities to enhance public awareness of child sexual abuse, its precursors and warnings, ways to protect children from it, and how to report its occurrence

“The recent commitment from multiple institutions and individuals is exactly what must occur in order to prevent child abuse in our state,” explains Steve Scott, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa's Executive Director. “It will take adults coming together from diverse backgrounds, putting children first. I am confident children will be safer if we follow the recommendations of the task force,” stated Scott.

To read the Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force report in its entirety, please visit <http://www.pcaiowa.org/resources/research>.

The task force included legislators; education, health, human services, and law enforcement officials; and representatives from Prevent Child Abuse Iowa, the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Iowa Psychological Association, and Iowa's child protection centers.

About Prevent Child Abuse Iowa

Since 1975, Prevent Child Abuse Iowa has served its mission to end child abuse in the entire state of Iowa. It is the only statewide organization dedicated to preventing child abuse through advocacy, research and communications. Prevent Child Abuse Iowa manages state and federal grant programs, which contribute financial support to community groups that provide services to families. Prevent Child Abuse Iowa is based in Des Moines, but has partnerships in nearly every county throughout Iowa. For more information, please call (800) CHILDREN or visit www.pcaiowa.org.

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