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Contact: Elaine Plunkett
412-350-6897
Elaine.Plunkett@AlleghenyCounty.us

Mark Bertolet
412-350-3439
Mark.Bertolet@AlleghenyCounty.us

Child Abuse Prevention Month Focuses on Keeping Children Safe at Home

PITTSBURGH – Every April, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services (DHS), with the support of community partners, launches an awareness campaign as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month. This year, the focus is on preventing poisonings in the home. Children under the age of six are six times more likely to experience poisoning from ingestible items than the population as a whole. DHS and A Child's Place are working to remind parents and caregivers to keep medicines and other hazardous substances away from children.

"DHS is invested in keeping children safe and protecting them from harm but we cannot do it alone. Parents, caregivers or anyone who has children visiting their home, must act to limit risks and prevent harm from happening in the first place," said DHS Director Marc Cherna.

"Medicines or drugs of any kind should be considered hazardous substances. We have seen several tragic incidents lately linked to children ingesting drugs they found lying around the house," said Dr. Mary Carrasco, Director of A Child's Place. "Anytime there is easy access to medicines or things that a child can swallow, it's a potential danger."

DHS created a web page with information and tips on creating a safe home for children. It includes resources on proper drug and cleaning supply storage and how to teach children about medicine and household safety. It also highlights a list of other items that could prove to be dangerous to children in the home.

For more information, please visit www.alleghenycounty.us/dhs/child-safety-ingestibles .

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Marc Cherna, Director

Department of Human Services – Office of Community Relations

101 Human Services Building | One Smithfield Street | Pittsburgh, PA 15222

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