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## **Kasich Administration Takes Another Step to Fight Human Trafficking** *Network of First Responders Will Help Young Human Trafficking Victims*

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), working in collaboration with the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force and the Ohio Department of Public Safety, is partnering with the Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers (ONCAC) to help minors who are victims of human trafficking.

“Medical professionals, law enforcement officers and social workers at Ohio’s 26 children’s advocacy centers will provide victims and their families with a broad range of services, including medical screenings, forensic interviews, case management and trauma-focused mental health services,” said ODJFS Director Michael Colbert. “I want to thank the Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers for providing a safe, nonthreatening place for children and teenagers to get help they need.”

Children’s advocacy centers are multidisciplinary teams that provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to child abuse. Professionals from child protective services, law enforcement, the local prosecutor’s office, victim advocacy groups, and medical and mental health fields provide specialized services in child-focused facilities.

Over the next two years, ODJFS will provide ONCAC with \$523,200 in funding to train the multi-disciplinary team members to provide direct services to minor victims of human trafficking, develop and identify important community resources, provide community workshops on human trafficking, partner with statewide partners to revise the current human trafficking response protocol and link each center with the regional Ohio Network of Anti-Human Trafficking Coalitions. When appropriate, the centers also will assist with human trafficking investigations.

“By partnering with the statewide network of child advocacy centers, we are ensuring that minor victims of trafficking have access to child-focused, high-quality care,” said State of Ohio Anti-Trafficking Coordinator Elizabeth Ranade Janis. “This excellent partnership will help build a network of providers with the technical capacity to respond to the unique needs of young trafficking victims throughout the state of Ohio, in both urban and rural areas.”

“The Ohio Network of Children’s Advocacy Centers and its member centers are honored to be named as the statewide provider network to serve as the first response system for minor victims of sex human trafficking,” said ONCAC Chapter Coordinator Amy Deverson Roberts. “The mission of children’s advocacy centers is to provide a coordinated, multidisciplinary team response and specialized services to victims of child maltreatment. We look forward to working with established anti-trafficking coalitions located throughout the state and helping to deliver the best possible care for Ohio’s sex trafficking minor victims.”

On March 29, 2012, Governor John R. Kasich signed Executive Order 2012-06K, creating the Ohio Human Trafficking Task Force. The task force issued 26 recommendations to better coordinate statewide efforts to identify and rescue victims, create a coordinated law enforcement system to investigate and prosecute these crimes, and provide the services and treatment necessary for victims to regain control of their lives. The full report is available at <http://www.governor.ohio.gov/Portals/0/pdf/news/OhioHumanTraffickingTaskForceReport.pdf>.