



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Colorado Lt. Governor to Lead Metro Denver Health & Wellness Commission**

**DENVER** – Colorado’s newly elected Lieutenant Governor, Barbara O’Brien, will serve as chairwoman of the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission (MDHWC). Formed in June 2006 by a group of public health, government and business leaders, the MDHWC’s goal is transform Metro Denver into America’s healthiest community. O’Brien’s history of continued service and advocacy to improve the health and lives of Colorado’s children positions her to lead the commission toward accomplishing its goals.

“Coloradans are vibrant and healthy, but we’re not immune to the nationwide rise in obesity and health care costs,” O’Brien said. “Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission leaders are aware of the strong connection between healthy people and a robust economy. This first-of-its-kind organization will work to understand our region’s health and wellness challenges, and provide real solutions that bolster our health and economic vitality.”

Prior to serving as Colorado’s Lieutenant Governor, O’Brien for more than a decade led the Colorado Children’s Campaign – the state’s leading children’s advocacy organization. O’Brien’s work leading health-related policy initiatives is vast, and includes the creation of the Child Health Plan program that provides insurance to children without healthcare coverage. She also served as co-chair of 2004’s Amendment 35 campaign to fund children’s healthcare with tobacco tax revenues.

O’Brien will work closely with the Commission’s co-chairs Broomfield Mayor Karen Stuart, Co-Vice Chair of the Metro Mayors Caucus; Dr. James Hill, Director of the Center for Human Nutrition at the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center; and Tom Clark, Executive Vice President of the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (Metro Denver EDC).

“As Governor Ritter stated in ‘The Colorado Promise’ policy book, ‘The single best thing we can do to lower the long-term cost of health care is to focus far more on preventative care and wellness,” O’Brien said. “I’m excited to be a part of the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission’s coalition of community leaders who are seeking to create a culture that encourages, supports and rewards individuals who make healthy choices.”

**About the Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission:**

The MDHWC is comprised of over 70 key stakeholders and leaders from Metro Denver academic, business, government, public health, health care, non-profit and philanthropic organizations. The Commission’s vision is to make metro Denver America’s Healthiest Community with a focus on promoting physical activity and nutrition programs and policies that enhance the well-being of the community—including our economic well-being. The Commission first met on June 29, 2006 and is drafting a strategic plan to achieve its goals and will issue the strategic plan and a report on the health of the Metro Denver region later this spring.

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