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New North Carolina Institute of Medicine Report Calls for Improved Transition Services and Supports for People with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities

June 4, 2009 – Morrisville, N.C. – Transitions for people with an intellectual and/or other developmental disability (I/DD) is the topic of a new North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) report officially released today. The report was requested by the North Carolina General Assembly.

More than 100,000 people in North Carolina have an I/DD, which is defined as a severe, chronic disability caused by mental or physical impairment that is likely to continue indefinitely. Because of their impairments, many people with I/DD need services and supports throughout their lifetime, including personal assistance, assistive technology, accessible transportation and vocational services. For these individuals, life transitions such as moving to a new home or losing a parent can be more difficult than for other people.

The NCIOM task force convened to study this issue developed recommendations to guide the state in helping people with I/DD successfully make transitions and live as independently as possible in the community. The task force specifically studied transitions for adolescents leaving high school, transitions for adolescents leaving the foster care system, transitions from developmental centers to other settings and transitions for people with I/DD who live with aging parents or other aging support providers.

“Every North Carolinian deserves to be integrated into a community and to live as independently as possible. This task force aimed to identify the most important steps that need to be taken to make this happen for people with I/DD,” said Pam Silberman, president and CEO of the NCIOM.

In 2006, federal, state and local governments spent approximately \$1.2 billion for services and supports for North Carolinians with I/DD. “One of the challenges the state faces is how to use its limited resources in the most equitable and efficient way possible to provide services and supports to people with I/DD. This is even more important in the midst of our current state budget deficit,” Silberman added.

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Priority recommendations from the NCIOM task force include increasing state and local developmental disability expertise and leadership, strengthening community capacity and ensuring that case managers and direct support workers are appropriately trained. In addition, the task force recommended that the state implement a system to determine the relative intensity of support needs among different individuals, so that limited resources can be distributed more appropriately.

The report's issue brief is attached. The full report is available at <http://www.nciom.org>. This is the fourth report released by the NCIOM this year.

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About the North Carolina Institute of Medicine

The North Carolina Institute of Medicine (NCIOM) is an independent, quasi-state agency that was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1983 to provide balanced, nonpartisan information on issues of relevance to the health of North Carolina's population. The NCIOM convenes task forces of knowledgeable and interested individuals to study complex health issues facing the state in order to develop workable solutions to address these issues.

<http://www.nciom.org>.