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Tuesday, January 26, 2010

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CRS staff member wins national award**



MONTGOMERY- Susan Colburn, state parent consultant for Children’s Rehabilitation Service, is being honored for her work in promoting greater involvement and inclusion for Alabama’s families of children and youth with special health care needs.

Colburn will be the third recipient of the Merle McPherson Family Leadership Award, a national honor presented by the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs (AMCHP). She will be receiving the award at the AMCHP conference on March 9 in Maryland.

“I am very humbled,” Colburn said. “The nicest part about the award is who it’s named after; Dr. McPherson really believed in family involvement and had a vision for changing health systems. It’s a tremendous honor to receive an award that bears her name.”

The award was established in January 2007, a year after McPherson retired from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, where she served as director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs from 1987-2006. She left a legacy of leadership and vision for how to create a new model of family-centered health care delivery for children and youth with special health care needs.

Colburn was voted to receive the honor by her counterparts in other states.

The AMCHP McPherson award is the highest recognition for exemplary contributions to connecting families and professionals within maternal and child health programs, said Michael R. Fraser, chief executive officer of AMCHP.

“Susan Colburn has been a longstanding leader in national family involvement work, including pushing her peers nationwide to meaningfully engage families in the work of state programs for children and youth with special health care needs,” he said. “She is a force for change not only in Alabama, but nationally, and it is a pleasure to have the chance to recognize her outstanding spirit, work, and contributions.”

Melinda Davis, assistant commissioner for Children’s Rehabilitation Service, also praised Colburn for her efforts on behalf of Alabama families.

“Susan is well-known at the community, state and national levels for her leadership and advocacy in family centered health care delivery,” Davis said. “She’s devoted countless hours over the last 20-plus years sharing her vision for children and youth with special health care needs and their families. She’s very deserving of this award, which acknowledges her dedication to furthering collaboration between families and professionals.”

Children’s Rehabilitation Service is a division of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, the state agency whose mission is to enable Alabama’s children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.