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## First Lady Mary Pat Christie Tours Department of Children and Families State-of-the Art Call Center to Highlight Domestic Violence Awareness Month

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### Participates in Domestic Violence Training with DCF Staff

**Trenton, NJ** – Building awareness about domestic violence and the co-occurrence of child abuse, First Lady Mary Pat Christie today got a firsthand view of the New Jersey State Central Registry (SCR), a 24 hour, 365 day a year, state-of-the-art call center that is the public's single point of entry to the NJ Department of Children and Families' Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS). Mrs. Christie toured the call center operation as part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

"No-one should endure the perils of domestic violence," said Mrs. Christie. "For victims and their children, raising awareness of this pervasive issue is integral to an important safety and support mechanism being provided by the Department of Children and Families. I am impressed by the technology and training being used to run their state-of-the-art call center to work with victims, keep children safe, and assist families in rebuilding a successful life without violence."

DCF initially becomes involved in domestic violence situations because it often co-occurs within a family with child abuse or neglect. Many child abuse and neglect allegations received by the SCR overlap with domestic violence. DCF's Domestic Violence Protocol was developed as a collaboration between DYFS, the Division of Prevention and Community Partnerships (DPCP) and the New Jersey Battered Women's Coalition.

Mrs. Christie also participated in an information sharing session with SCR supervisors on DCF's Domestic Violence Protocol, developed as a best practices guide for working with families with domestic violence issues. DCF Commissioner Allison Blake, DYFS Director Jean Marimon and DCF senior staff members accompanied Mrs. Christie.

"We are so grateful that the First Lady was able to see firsthand DCF's Domestic Violence Protocol in action. DCF developed the Domestic Violence Protocol as a guide for DYFS workers to use when not only working with families known to have domestic violence issues, but also to use when first speaking with families, to learn if there may be domestic violence occurring in the home," said DCF Commissioner Blake. "The training information for our SCR staff focuses on assessing risks during the short time a person may be on a call with SCR, enabling our staff to respond appropriately."

Created in 2004 as part of New Jersey's child welfare reform, the SCR streamlined government by replacing a system of 21 locally operated child abuse/neglect hotlines throughout the state. Six years after its establishment, the SCR is fully staffed with 105 full time and 68 part time employees and handles 14,000 to 15,000 calls a month. With SCR's systems now in place, DCF is focused on using data to improve outcomes and service delivery as well as to identify training needs.

"Technology utilized by the SCR allows supervisors and staff to effectively and efficiently provide service in a critical time of need along with recording outcome data and trends used to evaluate how DCF delivers responsive service to children and families throughout New Jersey," said DYFS Director Jean Marimon.

Calls are recorded for quality assurance purposes and supervisors listen to two to three calls of each screener per week. Technology allows the SCR supervisors to track in real time metrics such as: the length of time a screener has been on a call, the number of calls a screener has picked up during a day, week or month, how many call are in queue, which screeners are free to take a call, and where each screener on duty is at any given time.

Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abuse or neglected has a responsibility to report it to DYFS. The Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline can be reached at 1-877-NJ ABUSE.

Attached is a cropped photo for media use along with the following caption information: As part of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, First Lady Mary Pat Christie, DCF Commissioner Allison Blake, Deputy Commissioner Erin O'Leary and Assistant Commissioner Christine Mozes tour the New Jersey State Central Registry (SCR), a 24 hour, 365 day a year, state-of-the-art call center that assists victims and their families.

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