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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONERS PROCLAIM MARCH INTELLECTUAL & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AWARENESS MONTH

Cumberland County, PA – At their public meeting today, the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners presented a Proclamation to Sue Carbaugh, Director of the Cumberland-Perry Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Office, in recognition of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities Month. The goal is to increase public awareness and understanding of people who have intellectual and developmental disabilities so these individuals have access to community resources for employment, education, housing, and social opportunities to improve their quality of life. Individuals with IDD can make responsible decisions about their own lives with the appropriate resources.

This year, the Cumberland-Perry MH.IDD Office will continue to promote **Post-secondary Education** opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Historically, there were limited options for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who wanted to attend college and live their dream after high school and beyond. The D.R.E.A.M. Partnership was formed by parents and professionals in Central Pennsylvania who have extensive knowledge related to students with intellectual disabilities and post-secondary education to help make those dreams a reality for young adults with intellectual disabilities. Each student becomes part of a team of people who ensure that the necessary supports are in place for these students to achieve their goals of independence, socialization, and meaningful work. There is now an established network of colleges in the state of Pennsylvania to provide post-secondary educational opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. In addition, the Harrisburg Area Community College is offering the Career Bridges Program to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This new program will begin in Fall 2016. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities who participate in post-secondary education are 26 times more likely to be gainfully employed and have a 73% higher rate of pay than students who do not.

Every young adult with intellectual disabilities should have an opportunity to access post-secondary education along with their peers. Students with intellectual disabilities never stop learning and are capable of learning meaningful information that will provide lifelong fulfillment. By providing access to academic, community, and vocational exploration in a college setting, these students will make social connections, develop independent living skills, and are more likely to secure a position in the world of competitive employment.

For additional information on services and programs provided by the Cumberland-Perry MH.IDD Office visit online at www.ccpa.net/mhidd. To learn more about the D.R.E.A.M. Partnership visit www.dreampartnership.org. To learn more about the HACC Career Bridges program email lhleaven@hacc.edu.

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