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December 13, 2011

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**Minnesota Official Testifies on Fed/State Roles Against Child Abuse**  
*Tells Senate Panel Federal Funding for Child Maltreatment is Limited and at Risk*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A Minnesota children's services official today told a Senate panel that while there is a need for a stronger federal role in preventing and treating child abuse and neglect, mandatory reporting requirements are only a part that a solution. Testifying today before the Senate HELP Subcommittee on Children and Families, Erin Sullivan Sutton, Assistant Commissioner of Children and Family Services for the Minnesota Department of Human Services, said that funding and a greater focus on prevention are vital concerns.

"We need to work together to ensure that resources are available and policies aligned so that we can prevent child abuse and neglect, and when it does occur, to intervene in the most effective manner possible," Sullivan Sutton said.

Speaking on behalf of the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) and the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators, Sullivan Sutton noted that the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), the single federal source designed to address maltreatment of children, offers limited support to states to fully carry out its requirements. In Minnesota, she said, the CAPTA state grant is \$445,000 annually, while the state uses \$28 million for assessment and investigation of reports of alleged maltreatment. Sullivan Sutton acknowledged that state public child welfare agencies also tap into other federal funding to meet these needs, but those sources provide little funding for prevention and mainly support children placed in foster care or adoption.

Sullivan Sutton described a successful pilot program in Minnesota--not fundable through CAPTA--that engages families and provides services for parents in order to prevent child abuse and neglect. She called for an expansion of CAPTA's scope to align with the wide array of resources now available to promote child safety. With little prospect of increased funding, more flexibility to utilize available funds would be the most effective step to protect, prevent and deter child abuse going forward.

Meanwhile, in the wake of a high-profile child abuse investigation at Penn State University, the Senate is considering the "Speak Up to Protect Every Abused Kid Act," which would require every state to pass a universal mandated reporting law. Sullivan Sutton expressed concerns about the added costs to states to implement parts of the bill and said that, if passed, the bill must be adequately funded. Sullivan Sutton also warned that under the Budget Control Act, CAPTA is not exempt from sequestration and is at risk of damaging funding reductions.

"Children at risk deserve better than to be placed in harm's way by a blind reduction in funding," Sullivan Sutton said.

State Child Welfare is responsible for responding to abuse committed by a family member, caretaker, or someone living with the child.

## ***About APHSA***

APHSA is a bipartisan, nonprofit organization representing appointed state health and human service agency commissioners—the nation’s top government human service executives from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the territories—and their key state program managers, plus hundreds of county-level directors of human services throughout the nation—for the exchange of knowledge, data, best practices, policy review and development, networking and advocacy. APHSA’s mission is to pursue excellence in health and human services by supporting state and local agencies, informing policymakers, and working with our partners to drive innovative, integrated and efficient solutions in policy and practice.