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Experts available around the country for media interviews on developmental disabilities

Jointly Issued Statements about the December 2, 2015 Mass Shooting in California and its Impact on the Developmental Disability Community

From California State Council on Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) Chair, Dr. April Lopez:

Thank you for the prayers. As things unfold, we believe that people with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) were not the target of this violence. SCDD staff at the San Bernardino office are safe. Our thoughts are with the victims and their families, and with the people served by the Inland Regional Center (IRC) who lived through this senseless violence.

SCDD has offered our offices to the Inland Regional Center so they can seamlessly continue their work coordinating services for their clients with I/DD – including people with autism, cerebral palsy, or Down syndrome – and their families. IRC serves approximately 31,000 people throughout the Riverside and San Bernardino counties and employs approximately 600 people.

While this event hugely impacts what we consider safe space, SCDD will continue our work in San Bernardino County and across California to ensure that people with developmental disabilities and their families receive the services and supports they need. SCDD has offered to coordinate a task force on grief response support for people with disabilities, family members, and Inland Regional Center employees impacted by yesterday's events. The Council will call on the California Offices of Emergency Services to ensure that crisis emergency response teams know how to help people with disabilities when responding to mass shootings.

We remain available to the Governor, California Health and Human Services Agency, California Department of Developmental Services, Inland Regional Center, and people with developmental disabilities and families in San Bernardino and Riverside counties to be of whatever assistance we can be.

➤ Learn more at SCDD.CA.Gov

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From National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) Chief Executive Officer, Donna Meltzer:

Yesterday's shooting at Inland Regional Center was a tragedy for our nation. We hold all the victims in our thoughts and prayers. This event's location thrusts the Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) community, NACDD and the 56 State/Territory DD Councils support into the spotlight. Around the country, the work done by dedicated professionals at places like Inland Regional Center to help individuals with I/DD navigate services and reach their full potential deserves to be a positive and powerful story of this event.

NACDD also wants to draw particular attention to the importance of educating first responders to effectively recognize and successfully assist persons with developmental disabilities in emergency situations. We encourage the public to join self-advocates with I/DD and their families in advocating for local first responder training, and including people with I/DD as active and valued neighbors and community leaders.

Over 5 million people in the U.S. are estimated to have a developmental disability. According to the Developmental Disabilities (DD) Act, the term "developmental disability" means a severe, chronic disability that occurs before an individual is 22 years old that is likely to continue indefinitely, and results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self-care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility, self-direction, capacity for independent living, economic self-sufficiency. These impairments require the individual to sustain lifelong or extended supports or assistance. Diagnosed conditions may include autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, or spina bifida.

NACDD represents 56 member councils on developmental disabilities across the United States and its territories which receive federal funding to support programs that promote self-determination, integration, and inclusion for all people in the United States with developmental disabilities.

➤ Learn more at www.NACDD.org

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