



County of Berks
Office of the Commissioners

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Reading, PA –At the June 16, 2010 Commissioners’ Workshop Meeting, Commissioner Mark C. Scott, Esq. read a letter from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare’s Office of Children and Youth and Families congratulating Berks County’s Children and Youth Agency (CYS) for the reduction in the number of children placed in out-of-home care. Nationwide statistics reported a 25.5% reduction while Berks County has safely decreased the number by 32.2%.

According to CYS Director George Kovarie “Over the last four years, Berks County children and Youth Services has diligently partnered with cooperating families to keep children with their birth families or relatives using strengths based programs, and relying on the powerful resources that immediate and extended families can often bring. During this time period, the number of children removed from their homes by court order has been steadily declining, from a census of 802 in 2006 to 543 as of March, 2010. In addition, during the last year, over 200 children were voluntarily situated in safe relative homes without the need to involve our juvenile courts. We recognize our advances in child safety, permanency, and well being; we also acknowledge this is a process of continuous improvement. As well, taxpayers who fund all elements of child protective services with federal,

state and county dollars, have realized over \$3 million dollars in savings during these past four years.”

Commissioner Barnhardt said “the decline in out-of-home care shows a very measurable and positive impact on not just the budgetary pressures government faces, it can also reduce the emotionally charged child and family conflicts in the County. Helping families that are able to rely on their own resources to solve issues and avoid the need for judicial intervention is what I believe to be a move in the right direction. In the long term, I believe these efforts will continue to reverse the trend for future generations thereby helping families take care of families and moving away from the dependency on government intervention.”