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EOHHS Announces Leadership Transition at BHDDH

CRANSTON, R.I. (June 2, 2016) – Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts stated today that after laying a strong foundation for significant reform at the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH), Director Maria Montanaro has announced her decision to resign her position, effective June 24, 2016. Montanaro will continue to work tirelessly in the weeks ahead to secure the additional funding that Governor Raimondo has advocated for to support the requirements of a 2014 federal consent decree and provide higher-quality services for Rhode Islanders living with developmental disabilities.

Health and Human Services Secretary Elizabeth Roberts has appointed current Deputy Director Rebecca (Becky) Boss to serve as Acting Director of BHDDH during the transition to new permanent leadership.

“Over the past 18 months, Maria has worked tirelessly to address inherited challenges at BHDDH that are holding us back from providing safe, high-quality care to some of Rhode Island’s most vulnerable residents,” said Governor Gina M. Raimondo. “While our work is far from over, with Maria’s leadership we have made substantial progress and built a solid foundation for future reform. Maria has also played a critical role in our work to develop and implement an action plan to save lives from drug overdose. I am grateful to her for making BHDDH a stronger agency and positioning us for success in the next phase of reforms.”

“I am thankful for Maria’s strong and effective leadership of BHDDH,” said Roberts. “Under her tenure, we have strengthened the leadership team at Eleanor Slater Hospital, improved compliance with the Consent Decree to provide integrated, community based services for Rhode Islanders living with developmental disabilities, and taken swift action to ensure safety and improve accountability and transparency at our state-run group homes. I am grateful to Becky for stepping in as Acting Director, a position she has successfully served in before, and fully confident that under her leadership we will maintain momentum on the reforms Maria has initiated.”

“It has been an honor and a privilege to work with Governor Raimondo and Secretary Roberts to improve services and outcomes for Rhode Island families,” said Montanaro. “Since Governor Raimondo took office, we have enacted a series of innovative changes that are moving the Department in the right direction, and we have developed a strategic, focused action plan to reduce drug overdose deaths. Meaningful change takes time, and I am dedicated to working with the Governor’s team to ensure a smooth leadership transition that builds upon the solid reform efforts we have initiated.”

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