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PRESS RELEASE

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Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) will meet in Pueblo to discuss Emergency Preparedness Plans for Persons with Disabilities

Pueblo, CO March 6, 2009 – The Colorado Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) has released its findings concerning Emergency Preparedness Plans for Persons with Disabilities in Colorado and the news isn't good. The new issue brief states that people with disabilities living independently in the community are at risk in emergency situations when it comes to notification, evacuation and sheltering.

According to the 2004 American Community Survey, “an estimated 496,000 people in Colorado have a disability, or 11.9% of the population age 5 and over. An estimated 75,000 people, or 1.8% of the population 5 and over, have difficulty performing self-care activities, such as dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home.” It is this population who are most at risk during an emergency or disaster. Unfortunately, Colorado is not alone in being under prepared. According to *Richard Devylder, Special Advisor to the Director of the California Governor's Office of Emergency Service*, “The diversity of disability groups and its leadership, and established emergency management systems, brings natural confusion for both, as to who are the leaders to engage and how to make meaningful change in planning, systems and operations.” The meeting will be held Wednesday, March 18, 2009 from 9AM to 3PM at the Marriott Hotel, 110 W. First Street, Pueblo CO 81003. Persons with all types of disabilities are encouraged to attend the meeting and are invited to speak to the SILC briefly about the barriers they encounter as well as the successes they have in living and working in the community, during the public comment time which starts at 1PM. The presentation on Emergency Preparedness will start at 1:20PM. All SILC meetings are open to the public.

The Colorado SILC is a 17 member Council appointed by the Governor to orchestrate the vision of Independent Living services for all Coloradoans with disabilities. It oversees the development of the Independent Living network of services and is constantly assessing the needs of persons with disabilities who wish to live in the community. There are 10 Independent Living Centers who are funded with state dollars to provide information,

referral, peer support, advocacy and independent living services that enable persons with disabilities to live, work and participate in their local community. Centers may provide a range of other services based on the needs of their individual communities. More information can be found at www.coloradosilc.org.

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