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For immediate release – January 30, 2009

Gov. Henry names Terri White Health Secretary

Oklahoma City – Gov. Brad Henry today promoted Oklahoma Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Terri White to his executive cabinet, appointing her to the position of Secretary of Health. She will replace outgoing cabinet officer Mike Crutcher, who recently announced his retirement from state service.

White is the first woman to serve as Secretary of Health since the executive cabinet system was created in the 1980's.

“Terri has a proven track record of success as a public servant,” said Gov. Henry. “She’s been a dedicated and effective advocate for public health and has worked tirelessly to improve the state’s mental health and substance abuse services. I know she will do a great job in her expanded leadership role.”

White has served as Oklahoma’s Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services for the past two years. Previously, she served as the deputy commissioner of the state mental health and substance abuse services agency and as a fiscal and policy analyst for the Oklahoma State Senate.

White holds a bachelor’s degree in social work and a master’s degree in social work from the University of Oklahoma.

“This is a great honor, and I appreciate Gov. Henry’s confidence in me,” said White. “I look forward to working with him and other leaders in the public and private sectors to improve the health of Oklahoma.”

White resides in Oklahoma City with her husband, Scott Reed.

Terri White Biography

Terri White is the first woman nominated to be Secretary of Health for the State of Oklahoma. Nominated by Governor Brad Henry in January 2009 and pending Senate confirmation, White will serve as Secretary concurrently with her appointment as Commissioner of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS), a position she has held since May, 2007.

As Commissioner of the ODMHSAS, White serves as the CEO for one of Oklahoma's largest state agencies. The ODMHSAS has an annual budget of approximately \$300 million, employs 2,200 Oklahomans in facilities dedicated to the care of individuals with mental illness and addiction, and holds contractual relationships with over 100 private providers in a partnership to expand access to care throughout Oklahoma.

White is a passionate advocate for individuals experiencing mental illness and addiction, and is on the forefront nationally in the advancement of recovery based programs, technological innovations such as tele-psychiatry, and the integration of behavioral health care into the primary healthcare setting. She works tirelessly to make "recovery a reality" in Oklahoma and is a leading proponent of the value of prevention and early intervention initiatives to stem the financial costs and human consequences of untreated mental illness and addiction.

White joined the ODMHSAS in 2001 and has served the agency in multiple capacities, giving her the unique perspectives necessary to serve as Commissioner. Positions she held prior to her appointment as Commissioner include: Deputy Commissioner for Communications and Prevention; Director of Communications and Public Policy; Management Analyst; and, executive director of two ODMHSAS facilities – the Tulsa Center for Behavioral Health Co-Occurring Unit and the Central Oklahoma Community Mental Health Center.

Concurrently with each of these positions, White served as the primary legislative liaison for the agency. She credits her experience in both the administrative and direct care settings as important learning opportunities that promote compassion for consumers, sound fiscal management and administrative efficiency.

Her experience prior to joining ODMHSAS includes employment by the Oklahoma State Senate from 1998 through 2001, first as a policy analyst and then as a fiscal analyst. As a fiscal analyst, White staffed both the Human Services (2000-01) and the General Government and Transportation (1999-2000) appropriations subcommittees, analyzing budget requests and evaluating agency performance for twenty-seven state agencies.

During her professional career, White has been recognized by numerous organizations for her leadership and passionate work on behalf of all Oklahomans. She has the distinction of being the only state mental health and substance abuse director to serve concurrently on both boards for the national trade organizations of state agency mental health and substance abuse directors (National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors and the National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors). She has been recognized by the *Journal Record* twice as one of "50 Women Making a Difference" (2007 and 2008) and is the 2007 winner of the Mental Health Association of Tulsa's "William Packard Housing Award". She is a Class XIX graduate of Leadership Oklahoma and a member of the Rotary Club of Oklahoma City.

White is married to Scott Reed of Oklahoma City. She received both her Master of Social Work (1998) and her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (1997) from the University of Oklahoma, and is a graduate of Edmond Public Schools.