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Greetings NYSACRA Members!

· FILM ABOUT TEMPLE GRANDIN WILL AIR ON HBO 8:00 PM SATURDAY FEB. 6TH

HBO Films productions have created a film based on the life of Dr. Temple Grandin, a well-known speaker and author with autism who has written books on the subject of autism and Asperger's syndrome. Dr. Grandin presented at last year's annual conference. Claire Danes, a Golden Globe winner, plays Dr. Grandin, a stigmatized, misunderstood young woman who learned to channel her unique gifts into a brilliant career as a scientist, author and groundbreaking animal advocate. Catherine O'Hara co-stars with Julia Ormond and David Strathairn. Directed by Mick Jackson; screenplay by Christopher Monger and William Merritt Johnson, based on the books "Emergence" by Temple Grandin and Margaret Scariano and "Thinking in Pictures" by Temple Grandin.

- COMMISSION ON QUALITY OF CARE ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

The Commission on Quality of Care and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities (the Commission) is charged with protecting and improving the quality of life for New Yorkers with disabilities. It provides independent oversight of the quality and cost-effectiveness of services provided by mental hygiene programs in New York State. This 2008 Annual Report describes the Commission's activities in each of these critical mission areas.

- GOVERNOR DELIVERS STATE OF THE STATE MESSAGE

On Wednesday, January 6, Governor David Paterson delivered the 2010 State of the State message to a joint session of the State Legislature. The 40 minute speech highlighted three key areas: fiscal reform, ethics reform and economic development and job creation.

Throughout the Governor's speech, he referenced the need to rebuild the State's economy, rebuild the people's confidence and trust and to rebuild New York. The Governor announced that his fiscal reform plan will include cuts to the bureaucracy, agency consolidation, public tracking of the state's performance called EmpireStat and a long term strategy for fiscal planning. Lt. Governor Richard Ravitch will oversee the development of this plan. Most notably, the Governor will seek to institute a spending cap to help control the State's expenditures.

Governor Paterson also released a framework for reform of the entire system of state government. "Reform Albany Act" is a monumental proposal and contains several components including: the creation of a new independent State Government Ethics Commission comprised of five individuals with no ties to state officers and to oversee all branches of state government; improved reporting of outside business interests and full disclosure by both lobbyists and State officers; increased penalties for violation of such reporting and disclosure requirements; stricter campaign finance laws; and enhanced scrutiny of not-for-profit corporations "engaged in issue advocacy". Likewise, the Governor proposes to require the forfeiture of a public pension for public servants who are convicted of a felony crime associated with their public service.

The Governor stated that he will seek to establish term limits for Members of the State Legislature (six two-year terms) as well as limiting statewide office holders to two, four year terms.

The third key area which served as the platform of the Governor's speech was economic development and job creation. He proposes to replace the Empire Zone program with the Excelsior Jobs Program which focuses on high tech and clean energy jobs, utilize colleges and universities as catalysts for new technology, upstate job creation, a small business revolving loan fund and reinvigorate the New York Insurance Exchange. The Governor also proposes to refocus efforts on New York's manufacturing base through developing partnerships with regional non profit business organizations, clean energy manufacturing and redeveloping the Shoreham nuclear facility as a site for clean energy manufacturing.

Other notable highlights of the State of the State include: investments in energy infrastructure, urban/neighborhood revitalization, implementing recommendations from the Governor's Hate Crimes Task Force and the Families First Initiative.

· MORAHAN APPOINTED TO CHAIR THE SENATE MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COMMITTEE

State Senate Majority Conference Leader John Sampson appointed Senator Thomas Morahan to chair the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee. Senator Shirley Huntley, former chair of the committee was appointed to chair the Senate Cities Committee.

Morahan, a Republican from Rockland and Orange counties, previously chaired the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee.

NYSACRA congratulates Senator Morahan on his recent appointment and looks forward to his return as chair of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Committee. We wish to thank Senator Huntley for her support during her tenure as Chair.

· NYSACRA LEGISLATIVE DAY IS APPROACHING FAST!

Plans are well underway for the 2010 NYSACRA Legislative Day to be held on January 26th in Albany. The Legislative Session has already started with unprecedented and historic actions. January 26th provides NYSACRA members with the opportunity to let their voices be heard and be a part of government in action. If you plan to participate in the 2010 NYSACRA Legislative Day and have not yet registered, please fax or mail your completed registration form to the NYSACRA Office. For more information, contact Katie Mayo or Lisa Mount at 518-449-7551.