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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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Denver Unveils New Child Abuse Protocol

Denver officials today released a newly revised protocol for handling child abuse and child sexual assault cases that now includes specific guidelines for responding to cases involving drug endangered children.

In January 2005, Denver implemented a protocol for handling child abuse and child sexual assault cases which provided a road map for police, human services, health and hospitals as well as prosecutors for handling these sensitive cases in a way that did not add trauma while still ensuring the best possible investigation, prosecution and treatment.

Denver's protocol is newly updated and revised to include the growing need to respond to and care for children exposed to the sale, possession or use of illegal drugs as well as those exposed to the specific dangers associated with meth labs and marijuana growing operations. These children are often referred to as "Drug-Endangered Children" (DEC) and often face additional challenges, including decontamination and medical follow-up.

The Denver Police Department, Denver Human Services, Denver Health and the Denver District Attorney's Office, with support from Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, have joined together to implement this updated protocol, which represents best practices and provides an effective guide for all of those working on behalf of child victims.