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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Health Department Director Selected To Work on National Healthy Housing Action Plan**

*Genevieve Birkby elected to the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition Steering Committee*

**BALTIMORE, MD** (June 14, 2010) – Genevieve Birkby, M.A., MPH, director of the Community Planning & Initiatives Bureau within the Healthy Homes & Communities Division, has been elected to the National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition Steering Committee. Birkby will represent the city and work with national policy experts to improve housing conditions in Baltimore and nationwide, especially for low-income Americans.

The Coalition's mission is to implement the most promising and realistic recommendations for a National Healthy Housing Action Plan. Baltimore City's conversion of its childhood lead poisoning prevention program to a more comprehensive Healthy Homes approach has made it a national model. By helping residents eliminate lead paint, reduce asthma triggers and safely manage pests, the division seeks to prevent injuries and reduce health care costs.

"We need to make more progress on this front," said Madeleine Shea, deputy commissioner for the Health Department's Healthy Homes & Communities Division. "Genevieve is a fine choice because she understands the connections between home environments and child safety and has been a leader in the city transformation of the lead poisoning prevention program to a healthy homes program."

The first National Safe and Healthy Housing Coalition Meeting took place in May in Washington, D.C. The steering committee will oversee and guide the coalitions' work to build partnerships, advocate for more federal funding for Healthy Homes and Sustainability programs, and seek new federal regulations to support Healthy Housing initiatives.

Genevieve Birkby has worked in community-based public health initiatives since 2001 and currently oversees community-based healthy homes initiatives. She has previous experience coordinating a faith-based, lay-health educator-led community partnership in breast and cervical cancer prevention in Chicago.

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