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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Statement from Lt. Gov. Peter Kinder Regarding Governor's Call to Oversee Joint Investigation into Death's At Mental Health Facilities

Jefferson City, Missouri- Statement from Lieutenant Governor Peter Kinder as follows:

"I accept Governor Blunt's request to lead a statewide investigation into recent and past death's, neglect and abuse in private and public mental health care facilities in Missouri. These situations should not be allowed to happen under any circumstances. I pledge to all Missourians that I will get to the bottom of this life and death problem.

This appears to be a long-term structural problem in our Mental Health system that goes back for decades. We are committed to work to enforce the current laws against those who have preyed upon our most vulnerable citizens and hold them accountable for their actions. We will review current procedures and practices, and where necessary, urge passage of new legislation to stop any future abuse and mistreatment.

I plan to gather the appropriate department directors, staff and affected parties together for an initial organizational meeting to discuss procedures, timelines and goals for this committee. I commend Governor Blunt for his quick action and for allowing me to take the lead in solving this intolerable problem. I look forward to working with my good friend Ron Dittmore on this investigation. The Governor could not have made a better choice in naming an Interim Director for the Department of Mental Health."