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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Statement by Irwin Redlener, M.D.,
Director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at the Columbia
University Mailman School of Public Health and Member of the National
Commission on Children and Disasters,
on Need for Personal Disaster Planning Ahead
of Emergencies Like Blizzard**

NEW YORK (Dec. 29, 2010) –

“The failures in transportation and emergency care that New York City experienced in the blizzard’s wake resulted in fatal outcomes in some instances and exposed significant vulnerabilities in our overall response systems.

“This was clearly a serious weather event, but far more catastrophic events and disasters are possible. What we have been observing over the last few days underscores the importance of comprehensive disaster planning for potentially more devastating disasters like terrorist attacks.

“The paralyzing blizzard – and the inability of emergency vehicles to reach stranded citizens in need of care – also serves as a reminder that in serious disaster situations, help will generally not be readily available. It’s crucial for families to develop their own disaster plans in advance.”

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Mailman School of Public Health

Founded in 1922 as one of the first three public health academies in the nation, Columbia University’s Mailman School of Public Health pursues an agenda of research, education, and service to address the critical and complex public health issues affecting New Yorkers, the nation and the world. The Mailman School is the third largest recipient of NIH grants among schools of public health. Its 300 multi-disciplinary faculty members work in more than 100 countries around the world, addressing such issues as infectious and chronic diseases, environmental health, maternal and child health, health policy, climate change & health, and public health preparedness. It is a leader in public health education with over 1,000 graduate students from more than 40 nations pursuing a variety of master’s and doctoral degree programs. The Mailman School is also home to numerous world-renowned research centers including the

International Center for AIDS Care and Treatment Programs (ICAP), the National Center for Disaster Preparedness and the Center for Infection and Immunity. For more information, please visit www.mailman.columbia.edu

National Center for Disaster Preparedness (NCDP)

NCDP is an academically based, inter-disciplinary center focused on the nation's capacity to prevent and respond to terrorism and major disasters. NCDP's areas of expertise include disaster preparedness and response, mental health treatment, pediatric issues, and the socio-political dimensions of terrorism. NCDP is a national and international leader in disaster and terrorism.