

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FLORIDA’S FORMER SECRETARY OF JUVENILE JUSTICE TO SPEAK IN SARASOTA

Dr. Anthony J. Schembri, the former Florida Secretary of Juvenile Justice under Governor Jeb Bush will be the keynote speaker at the upcoming 5th Annual Sarasota Shining Stars Recognition & Awards Luncheon on Thursday, March 18th, 2010 at the Hyatt Regency Sarasota Grand Ballroom. The event is hosted by the Sarasota Coalition on Substance Abuse (SCOSA) and will recognize leaders in Sarasota who have made positive impacts on reducing the ill effects of substance abuse.

Prior to coming to Florida, Dr. Schembri served as the Commissioner of the New York City Department of Corrections under then Mayor, Rudolph Guliani, and as police commissioner in Westchester County, NY where he became the inspiration for the hit TV Show, “The Commish.” “At a time when our community is seeking ideas and input into the building of a new jail and our inmate population remains high, Dr. Schembri’s visit cannot be more timely”, states Curt Lavarello, Executive Director of the Sarasota Coalition.

In addition to Dr. Schembri, the Coalition has also been in communication with President Barack Obama’s newly appointed Drug Czar, R. Gil Kerlikowske, about his attending this event. “I have spoken to Director Kerlikowske personally and he is very excited about the possibility of traveling to Sarasota County to attend our event”, continued Lavarello. We are hoping for a confirmation in the coming weeks.

Along with the nationally known speakers, the Coalition will honor its Citizen of the Year, Thomas L. Randle Jr., Interim Executive Director of Sarasota’s Habitat for Humanity. “Mr. Randle served on the Board of Directors for the Coalition for the past 8 years, and I cannot think of someone who has given so much of themselves to substance abuse prevention in our community”, states Sherri Reynolds, Board Chair for the Sarasota Coalition. North Port resident and volunteer, Monica Becket, will also be presented with the Coalition’s “Shining Star” award for her dedication, commitment and countless hours she contributes to saving lives in Sarasota County.

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