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NEW LAW WILL KEEP KIDS SAFE AT ALL CAMPS

New York, NY (April 21, 2011) – The 2009 law sponsored by Assembly Member Amy Paulin (D-Westchester) was necessary to close a gaping loophole in a decades old law that protected children at outdoor camps but ignored children doing the very same activities indoors. The loophole was exposed when a Westchester County DOH inspection found a number of very serious safety violations - including blocked fire exits - at an indoor camp, but inspectors were powerless to do anything, because they lacked any jurisdiction over indoor camps.

Outdoor day camps in New York are licensed and inspected by the Department of Health and have been for over 30 years, and indoor programs were exempt from this requirement regardless of similar activities, such as gymnastics and climbing walls. Statistics show that 99.8% of children who attend permitted outdoor camps in New York State return home from camp with no injury. This is because the Department of Health has worked together with camp directors to make sure that the appropriate safety standards are in place. Parents have the right to expect that all programs, whether indoors or outdoors, are safe.

“These regulations don't stop our campers from enjoying such traditional summer games as red rover, freeze tag, dodgeball, or capture the flag,” said Adam Langbart, President of the New York State Camp Directors Association. “This new law is about making sure that all camps in New York are meeting basic safety standards. Safety is no accident. The camp community and the Department of Health have worked closely to make sure that sound rules are in place to ensure the safety and well being of our campers. These rules are vital whether a child is swimming outdoors in a lake or in an indoor pool.”

For further information or to speak with a camp spokesperson, please contact Jess Michaels at the American Camp Association, NY and NJ at 212.391.5208 x1015/jess@aca-nynj.org or Adam Langbart, President of the New York State Camp Directors Association at 516.483.7272 or adam@merrickwoods.com.