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CONTACT: Kathryn Sampson, Community Options Inc.
(609) 352.5280

Community Options to Hold National Conference in South Carolina to Celebrate 10 Years of Service

PRINCETON, NJ -- To celebrate 10 years of providing housing and employment support to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in South Carolina, Community Options will hold its 11th Annual iMatter Conference at the Francis Marion Hotel from September 24-27.

Each year, Community Options focuses on a current issue, trend or development that impacts the lives of people with disabilities worldwide. At this juncture, no issue could be more relevant than unemployment within the disability community. Embracing the philosophy that all people who want to work can and should be able to work, Community Options will delve into the pathways that government, private industry and non-profits together can forge to create opportunities for employment for all.

This year's iMatter conference, titled "A Meaningful Life: An iMatter Conference on Supported Employment," will offer a program that challenges attendees to rethink, even re-imagine, traditional approaches to employment. An array of distinguished experts and honored guests will share their experience and knowledge with conference attendees. Featured speakers include Dr. Beverly A. Buscemi, South Carolina's Department of Disabilities and Special Needs; Michael Callahan, Marc Gold & Associates; Chris DeVany, Pinnacle Performance Improvement Worldwide; Bonnie Jean Smith, Parent, Member of the Minnesota Governor's Council; and Tim Riesen, Ph.D., Utah State University, Dept. of Special Education and Rehabilitation .

"Community Options has been an invaluable asset to our community," said Charleston Mayor John Teckleburg, who will open the conference events on Monday morning with the Reading of the Proclamation. "Charleston is happy to be a part of Community Options' national efforts, and we look forward to working with them to focus on inclusion for all of our citizens."

The Betty Pender Award, which is presented to the person who exemplifies the mission of Community Options, will be presented to United States Ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley. This prestigious award, named in honor of Betty Pender who gave tireless effort to promoting the interests of those with disabilities, has been presented to Governor Tom Kean, Elaine Katz of Kessler Foundation and Senator Joe Kyrillos, all of whom have made extraordinary contributions to advancing equality, belonging and opportunity for people with disabilities

Dorothy Goodwin, the State Director of South Carolina for Community, looks forward to hosting the event in the Palmetto State.

"We are beyond excited to be hosting Community Options' 2017 National Conference in beautiful Charleston South Carolina on the 10th Anniversary of the agency's opening in our great state. Plans are underway to ensure an action-packed event both during conference hours and in the evenings with many activities and events available within walking distance. We experienced one of our largest growth periods during the 2016-2017 fiscal year, are now offering Supported Employment services in all three regions of the state as well as making

plans to expand into the Pee Dee Region of the state. So, there's much to celebrate during our 10th Anniversary!"

The Community Options iMatter Conference will be held at the Francis Marion Hotel, located at 387 King St, Charleston, SC 29403. For more information or to register to attend, visit www.comop.org

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About Community Options, Inc.:

For 28 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people through over 40 offices across 11 states. Community Options provides advocacy assistance to empower people with disabilities because all people – regardless of ability level – should live and work in the community with dignity, choice and self-determination. For more information please visit our website: www.comop.org and to follow along with the ComOpCares campaign, search #ComOpCares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.