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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Felicia Johnson appointed Commissioner of state VR agency

Felicia W. Johnson of Columbia has been appointed as Commissioner of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (VR). The department prepares and assists South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive integrated employment.

Commissioner Johnson had served in the role on an interim basis since July 1 of last year. She grew up in Summerville, SC and began her work with the department as a student intern before joining the staff as an exercise physiologist in 1998. She has since gained well-rounded experience as a counselor in the Richland office, assisting youth with disabilities transitioning from school to work and serving individuals referred by the correctional system. She was promoted to area supervisor in Camden and later served as area supervisor for two of the agency's largest area offices, Richland and Lexington, simultaneously. In 2014, Johnson moved to the VR central office in West Columbia as manager of statewide field operations before being named interim commissioner.

"Over the past year as interim commissioner Ms. Johnson has shown exceptional ability to lead our agency," said Dr. Roxzanne Breland, Board Chair for the State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation. "She not only has built credibility over 20 years in the field but has shown her ability to consolidate positions, cut costs, and redirect responsibility in an advantageous way that has increased efficiency without sacrificing service delivery to our clients with disabilities. The board looks forward to seeing the changes and increased performance as Commissioner Johnson moves forward with her plans for our agency."

"I am honored to have been selected by our board to serve as Commissioner of this great organization," said Commissioner Johnson. "I entered this agency over 20 years ago as an intern seeking to fulfill the requirements of my bachelor's degree program, intending to move on. However, after completing my first week of working directly with clients with physical limitations to help them increase their strength and stamina and prepare for employment, I knew this is where I wanted to stay. I am dedicated to achieving the agency's mission and excited about the journey ahead." Commissioner Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in exercise science from the University of South Carolina, a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling from South Carolina State University and is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

She is married to Condie W. Johnson, Jr., Special Investigator for the South Carolina Office of the Attorney General. They have two children; son, Chance (age 9) and daughter, Kennedy (age 7).

During the current fiscal year approximately 6,500 individuals with disabilities are projected to achieve successful employment outcomes after receiving services from VR. Additional information about the department can be found at scvrd.net.

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Photo of Felicia W. Johnson attached