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COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Texas Department of Human Services

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Looking ahead to 1993, we anticipate a very busy, challenging year. While activities to implement House Bill 7 will continue to gain momentum and attention, providing the best services possible for people in need will remain our top priority. More than 3 million Texans received services through the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) in fiscal year 1992, as lingering economic hard times caused record numbers of people to seek help for necessities such as food and health care. Without a dramatic turnaround in the Texas economy, demands for client services will continue to strain the agency's limited fiscal and staff resources.

To increase the likelihood of making long-term, positive differences in people's lives, DHS will continue to emphasize programs and initiatives that focus on prevention, self-sufficiency, and community-based services.

During fiscal year 1993, the agency will be involved in several projects that will test new, innovative ways of serving clients while also offering significant opportunities to conserve scarce dollar resources. Two different approaches to coordinated health-care services for Medicaid clients will be evaluated for effectiveness in increasing access to care, improving the quality of care, and managing costs.

In Harris County, the agency will participate with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, the State Treasury, and others in an Electronic Benefit Transfer pilot to distribute food stamps and Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits using automated teller machines and point-of-sale technology. DHS will also continue to play an active role in the client-access projects that were initiated by legislative directive in 1992 as a first step in shaping a service-delivery process that is more responsive to client needs.

Organizationally, 1993 will be a year of transition to the new structure for health and human services outlined in House Bill 7. Significant organizational changes have already occurred, including preparations for the transfer of the protective services, child-care licensing, energy assistance, and emergency assistance programs to other agencies on Sept. 1, 1992.

In fiscal year 1993, DHS will participate with the Health and Human Services Commission and other agencies in developing the first strategic plan and consolidated budget for health and human services in Texas. Preparations will be completed for changes associated with the designation of the Health and Human Services Commission as the single state agency for Medicaid in Texas, effective Jan. 1, 1993. Also in the next year, we will begin reporting agency data in accordance with new uniform regional boundaries for all health and human services in the state and prepare for adjustments in the DHS regional management structure to conform with the state's uniform regions.

Throughout the year, DHS will be participating with the Texas Department of Health in intensive planning and preparation for a smooth transfer of the

purchased health, indigent health, and preventive health services programs to the new Texas Department of Public Health on Sept. 1, 1993. In light of the many changes occurring in health and human services, we will take a fresh look at DHS' role in serving needy Texans and how we can carry out our mission most effectively.

In all these endeavors, our approach will be one of openness and collaboration with a wide array of interested parties, including state and local agencies, federal officials, advisory groups, advocates, providers, and local communities. We welcome the leadership and special perspective that Health and Human Services Commissioner Richard C. Ladd brings to the process of forging a service-delivery process that can respond promptly to Texans and their needs. It's a big challenge, but also a tremendous opportunity to help people get their lives—and Texas—moving in promising new directions.



Burton F. Raiford

Texas Department of Human Services Commissioner