

Dear Fellow Texan:

Welcome to the 1996 annual report of the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS).

Our mission is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In pursuit of this charge, the department provides child pro-

tective services, child-care licensing, and adult protective services.

The safety of our most vulnerable citizens is a matter of concern to all Texans. The department's ability to carry out its responsibilities effectively has far-reaching consequences, not only for the well-being of at-risk children and adults today, but for the future of Texas as well. As the long-term effects of abuse and neglect become more

apparent, PRS is increasing prevention efforts. Innovative programs to create community support for families and prevent juvenile crimes are enhancing the department's traditional intervention efforts.

With limited funds available, PRS made great efforts to increase the involvement of local communities. Thousands of volunteers and businesses throughout the state generously donated time, money, or goods and services to help their neighbors. Exciting new projects launched during the year, such as Texas Community Partners, increased the opportunities for communities to participate in efforts to prevent abuse and neglect.

Fiscal year 1996 was a difficult time for PRS. Faced with a fiscal crisis at the beginning of the year, the department was forced to lay off staff and make cuts in other areas. Since then, a major focus of the department has been to improve management and accountability to make the most of the resources we have. Automation of many casework and reporting functions, which came with imple-

mentation of the Child and Adult Protective System (CAPS) at the end of the year, promises to enhance the department's efficiency.

Although PRS continues to face significant challenges, the future looks brighter. We are striving to reduce the time children spend in foster care and reduce barriers to adoption. We are working with advocates and the industry to assure quality child-care for working parents. Improved communication between PRS and other agencies ensures better care for disabled persons in state facilities. And the department continues to seek solutions for the problems of abuse and neglect among the state's rapidly growing elderly population.

Thanks to the department's dedicated staff and volunteers, and its many partners in the community, we are making a difference in the lives of thousands of Texans. ■



Maurine Dickey, LMSW-AP
Chairman

Introduction

James R. Hine,
Executive Director

PRS is an agency in transformation. Throughout our organization, we're taking a fresh look at the way we do business and making changes to provide better service to the people of Texas. We've reduced bureaucratic layers of management, simplified paperwork, and computerized record keeping. At the same time, we've increased quality control measures and added new fiscal controls to ensure the best use of our resources.

Our greatest efforts have been directed to improving services for our clients. We are striving to increase the quality and effectiveness of core functions such as investigation, intervention, and regulation of child care.

Many of these innovations are described in this report. And there is more to come. In 1997 we will be working to speed up the adoption process and improve foster care. We

will be increasing training for staff, incorporating a certification process now being developed in partnership with the University of Texas School of Social Work, and improving investigations procedures.

We will be increasing community-based prevention and family services programs. We will continue working with providers and other agencies to improve the quality of service our clients receive. We will continue working with child-care providers to improve the quality of child-care. Monitoring of registered family homes should increase, and plans are now underway to provide more information to help parents with their child-care decisions.

Although there is much still to be done, we are making real progress. We are beginning to move forward, toward a better future for all Texans. ■



Overview of PRS

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) was created by the 72nd Legislature and became a separate agency on September 1, 1992. PRS is charged with protecting children from abuse and neglect, and with protecting the elderly and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. PRS is also responsible for regulation of child-care facilities, child-placing agencies, and maternity homes, and for investigating allegations of abuse and neglect within Texas Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation facilities and community centers.

PRS is governed by a six-member board appointed by the Governor to staggered six-year terms. The board sets policy and selects an executive director, who is responsible for administration and operations. The department employs 5,800 staff. Offices are located throughout the state, which is divided into 11 regions. The department's headquarters are in Austin. ■

Board mem

Maurine Dickey, LI
Chaiman
Dallas

Penny Beaumont
Bryan

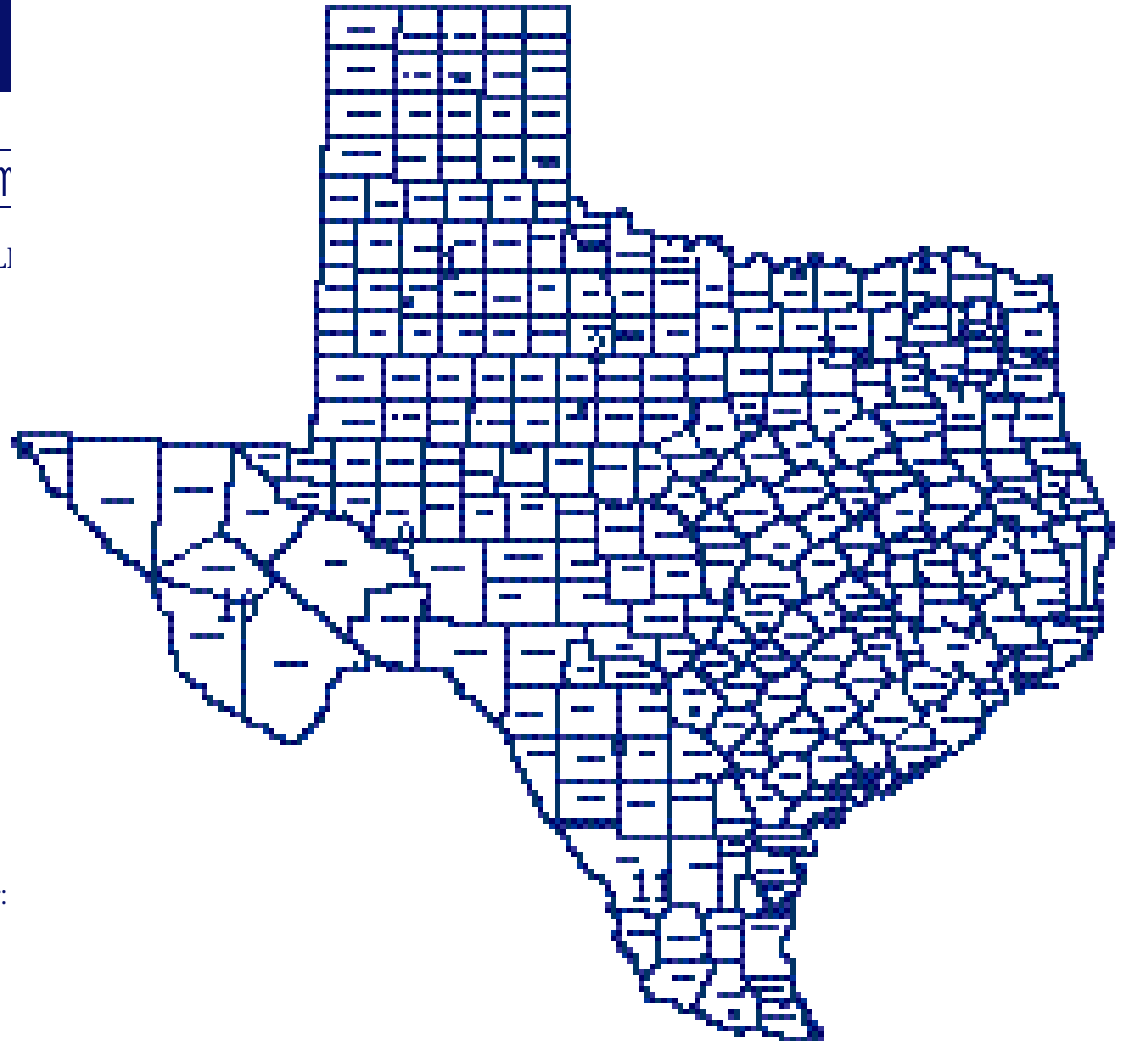
Jon M. Bradley
Dallas

Catherine Clark
Mosbacher
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Bill Sheehan
Dumas

Susan Stahl
Dallas

Executive Director:
James R. Hine



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