



Executive Summary

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PRS has improved the quality of services delivered by emphasizing results rather than tasks. This, coupled with mid-year executive level reviews in each division, measures outcomes and accountability. PRS is led by a six-member rule-making board, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate. The board also appoints an executive director who directs almost 6,700 employees in 11 administrative regions and a state headquarters in Austin. Four major programs make up PRS: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services (CPS) division of PRS improved services to children and families by enhancing the risk assessment tool to guide staff in their decisions about child safety. CPS, with support from other divisions within PRS, is preparing for the federal Child and Family Service Review in February 2002.

Several ongoing efforts should increase the numbers of foster and adoptive homes and improve services to children and families. CPS has reduced the time needed to achieve a permanent home for children in temporary state care. CPS implemented a Collaborative Adoption Project that includes co-housing private agency staff in a PRS office, developed a Parent Collaboration Group and implemented a respite care program for child-placing agency foster parents. CPS is developing placements for foster children in family settings if they can more appropriately be moved from institutions. The Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE) is significantly enhancing the www.adoptchildren.org Web site.

PRS implemented several initiatives to decrease staff turnover. Targeted efforts to improve turnover include implementing a telework pilot program, a statewide employee recognition program and a leadership development program for staff.

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services (APS) is recognized nationally as a model program for investigating abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults who are elderly or have disabilities.

APS began developing a worker and supervisor certification program and contributes to national efforts to improve protection for vulnerable adults.

APS organized and led a statewide task force, known as the Financial Abuse Cessation Team, to stop financial exploitation of seniors by developing a kit to train financial institution staff to recognize and report suspicious transactions. APS also implemented the Wire Third Party Inquiry, an online system that allows APS professionals, on behalf of their clients, to request and receive data from the Social Security Administration. Comprehensive quality assurance reviews helped improve casework and shared case management techniques across the state. Additionally, APS supported community efforts to prevent and serve victims of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation.

For almost 20 years, the Texas APS program has produced a premiere conference in the field of adult protection. The 17th annual APS Conference introduced a pre-conference trainer's track, expanded the number of workshops, and added sessions for medical and law enforcement professionals.

Child Care Licensing

Child Care Licensing (CCL) resource consultants and other licensing staff provided extensive training and technical assistance to child-care providers. CCL trained more than 16,000 current or potential child-care providers. CCL partnered with the Texas Department of Health in five regions to certify child-care providers as vision and hearing screeners to meet legal requirements for vision and hearing screening for preschoolers in child care.

CCL developed and implemented rules for residential child-care facilities to protect children from unsafe restraining and seclusion practices.

The Child-care Licensing Automation Support System (CLASS) became operational on Aug. 27, 2001. The new automation system enhances the child-care search function on the PRS Web site for families and enables staff to record results of inspections and investigations of child-care facilities. Child-care solutions are within reach now at www.txchildcaresearch.org.

Texas APS is recognized as a model program and contributes to national efforts to improve protection for vulnerable adults. In 2001, Texas APS director, Bettye Mitchell, served as president-elect of the National Association of APS Administrators (NAAPSA) and is also on the board of the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse. She chaired the NAAPSA search committee that selected the organization's first executive director. Mitchell also spoke at the National Organization of Victims Assistance conference in Edmonton, Canada, using the Texas APS program as a model for serving adult victims of abuse.

Prevention and Early Intervention

Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) programs are administered through contracts with local community agencies or organizations that provide a variety of prevention services. An integrated computer data management system is helping both PRS and contractors more effectively manage these contracts and prevention services. So far, Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR), Community Youth Development, At-Risk Mentoring and Communities In Schools are online.

PEI expanded many of its existing programs and began incorporating new ones as directed by the Legislature. Community Youth Development grew from 13 to 15 programs. Facility-Based Youth Enrichment Services expanded from one to three programs. Communities In Schools of Texas hosted a training con-

ference for more than 500 field staff and volunteers from 26 local programs. PEI staff has been preparing for the first annual PEI Provider Conference. PEI is working with the United Ways of Texas to assess the needs of and coordinate seamless prevention services to six non-urban counties in Texas. Since the Legislature transferred the Children's Trust Fund to PRS, PEI is striving to integrate prevention services seamlessly without duplication.

Cross-Program Initiatives

Strength Through External Partnerships (STEP) is a large-scale, multiyear project that seeks to expand collaboration with external partners, create a more holistic child protection system and improve the services to children and families.

PRS continues the statewide public awareness abuse and neglect prevention campaigns for children and elderly Texans. The *It's Up To You* campaign goal is to prevent

child abuse, and the *Not Forgotten* campaign targets isolation as the main risk factor that leads to adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. Logon to www.itsuptoyou.org and www.notforgotten.org for more information.

PRS created the Leadership Development Steering Committee and charged them with creating a program to help PRS staff enhance their leadership skills. The plan has three components: training, mentoring and interning to develop staff members who have supervision experience and specific knowledge of the agency. The leadership program will help prepare staff to fill impending management vacancies from anticipated retirements.

PRS conducted a number of innovative pilot projects to improve worker satisfaction and productivity. Two examples of PRS' commitment in this area are the Deliver Accountable Services from Home (DASH) Project and the laptop pilot project. The recently implemented DASH project is intended to improve productivity, increase employee satisfaction, and reduce turnover by using a customized workweek and a form of telecommuting. Evaluations of the laptop project showed increased job satisfaction and productivity of CPS caseworkers and supervisors. Pilot participants reported that laptops enabled them to spend more time with clients, reduce their backlogged documentation, and afforded them a better balance between work and family life.

The mission of the Cultural Diversity Council is to develop a respectful and supportive environment for culturally diverse issues that affect the population served by PRS staff. This includes reviews of agency's personnel, training, and service delivery practices, with primary goals of ensuring sensitivity, respect for individual differences, and cultural competency in all areas of our work.

Ombudsman

PRS has an impact in the lives of the people we serve. When they disagree with our actions, they may contact our ombudsman's office at 1-800-720-7777 for an impartial review of their case. The review determines whether the agency's policies have been followed properly. If corrective action is needed, PRS offers a variety of solutions such as administrative reviews, hearings and mediation.

During 2001 the ombudsman office received 5,168 contacts from various sources including the public, consumers, elected officials, other agencies and PRS staff. Of the 5,168 contacts received, 2,218 complaints/ inquires required action, such as documenting the concerns in our

Recognitions

■ The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services awarded two PRS regional programs the Adoption 2002 Excellence Award. Cameron and Hidalgo County Child Protective Services foster care and adoption programs received the national award. Adopt 2000, a Houston collaboration designed to increase the number of adoptive families for PRS children, received the award for serving children with special needs.

■ Bell County residents recognized Adult Protective Services caseworker Lorin Halstead for her 20 years in Belton working with the elderly and people with disabilities. In a feature article, the *Temple Daily Telegram* profiled Halstead quoting her as saying: "I truly enjoy my clients and especially the elderly ones, because they have so much wisdom to impart if you just take the time to listen."

■ All Child Care Licensing representatives and administrative technicians in Unit 10 of the Edinburg region received certificates of excellence from state Sen. Judith Zaffarini in recognition of outstanding service to ensure quality child care. Staff expanded the information they provide about child care to parents and providers through two bilingual newsletters, one for parents and one for providers. Each quarter 1,600 copies of the newsletter *Parent Power* is sent to providers.

■ David Cory, community initiatives specialist for Region 9, received an award from the Texas Council of Child Welfare Boards. Cory was honored as "Outstanding Staff Person" for his dedicated service to Texas children.

■ The Preparation for Adult Living program received the National Independent Living Association agency award for efforts, resources and commitment to help youth transition from foster care to adult living.

■ PRS received the 2000 Vision of Excellence Award for visionary leadership in preparing foster care youth for college.

■ The central Texas region African-American Foster Adopt Recruitment Campaign received the 2001 Crystal Award of Excellence.

■ Janis Brown, assistant director of CPS, and Ella Zamora, Web publisher for PRS, were chosen to assist in the functional design of the National Adoption Center's Adoption Photo-listing Service.

■ Jim Hine, former executive director of PRS, received the 2001 Bob Bullock Award for Outstanding Public Stewardship. The Bob Bullock Award recognizes individuals who "strive for innovative government that improves the lives of Texans." The Administration on Children, Youth and Families gave Hine the 2001 Commissioner's Award for significant contributions toward the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

automated system, requesting information from regional administrators, determining if the specific program followed policy and procedure, and providing feedback to the inquirer. The validation rate of complaints has consistently been 6 percent for the past several years.

Technology

Many upgrades and enhancements in response to workers' concerns have been made to the Child and Adult Protective System (CAPS) this year. The CAPS project was recognized nationally and featured in an article by the National Resource Center on Information Technology and Child Welfare. Other improvements include the frequency that automated systems are routinely available to the agency and improvements to several processes such as monthly data collection, CAPS backup and recovery, and dial-up access for remote workers. Staff installed over 6,000 new computers and updated the software on another 1,700 computers across the state. Thirty people worked for six months to accomplish the task at one-third the cost that was quoted by an outsource provider.

In January 2001, IT management formed the I-Net unit to focus on the Internet and Intranet as emerging technologies to provide business and service solutions. The unit is fully staffed from four sections: Web page development, forms, Intranet reports and Intranet/Internet systems development. An agency-wide group with representation from all areas of PRS, called the I-Net Committee, will develop I-Net policy for the agency and prioritize small systems for development by the I-Net unit.

An intrusion detection system, which monitors the PRS network for potential intruders or hackers, was installed in 2001. This system, along with anti-virus software, has enabled the agency to be unscathed by the hundreds of viruses released last year.

Compact with Texans

PRS is committed to customer service by forming a Compact with Texans that pledges to provide the highest quality and most responsive services possible. The Compact with Texans will provide for customer surveys and focus groups to ensure PRS' quality and responsiveness.

Significant Legislation

The 77th Legislature invested more than \$151 million in new funding and 218 new staff members in protecting the unprotected through PRS. The agency will have nearly \$1.6 billion and more than 6,900 full-time employees during the next two years.

Most notable is the Legislature's commitment to maintain current caseloads in CPS, APS and CCL. The appropriations bill sets aside around \$9.6 million and provides for 137 full-time employees to keep CPS caseloads at their current levels. It also allocates almost \$2.2 million and 33 full-time workers for APS MHMR investigation caseloads. Budget writers used \$1.9 million of the federal Child Care Development Fund to maintain CCL caseloads at their current levels by adding 41 workers. In addition to maintaining caseloads, the new state budget provides \$4.9 million to maintain APS funding for emergency client services. In all, PRS will receive more than \$19 million to maintain current emergency services and caseload levels.

Lawmakers heard a great deal about turnover this session, and they responded with pay raises and money to improve working conditions for high turnover positions. The Legislature targeted \$11.7 million for those classified as protective services specialists. They gave PRS \$1.5 million to provide more than 500 laptops for CPS caseworkers. To improve safety for field staff, the 77th Legislature appropriated funds so that starting Sept. 1, 2001, CPS workers and supervisors may receive up to \$50 a month for business use of their personal cell phones. All of this is on top of an across-the-board state employee raise.

Along the lines of improved working conditions, the Legislature appropriated \$17.6 million for PRS automation projects. More than \$10 million of it is to enhance CAPS and make it Web accessible. Another \$6.2 million of automation money was allocated for the Child-care Licensing Automated Support System (CLASS).

Members of the Legislature also helped those who help PRS. Foster care rates and adoption subsidies are going up by 5 percent in the next two years to help foster and adoptive parents, residential providers, child-placing agencies and emergency shelters. To allow more working parents to become foster parents, lawmakers added \$3.4 million to the PRS budget to purchase day care.

Hotlines and Online Resources

Hotlines

Texas Abuse Hotline	1-800-252-5400
Report abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, the elderly or people with disabilities.	
Foster Care and Adoption Inquiry Line	1-800-233-3405
Information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent.	
Child-Care Information	1-800-862-5252
Information about child care in Texas.	
Ombudsman Hotline	1-800-720-7777
Make an inquiry about an existing PRS case or make a complaint.	
Texas Runaway Hotline	1-888-580-HELP
To provide peer counseling to runaways and family members.	
Texas Youth Hotline	1-800-210-2278
To provide peer counseling to youth and family members for family conflicts, delinquency, truancy and running away.	
Abuse in MHMR Facilities	1-800-647-7418
To report abuse, neglect or exploitation in MHMR facilities.	

Agency Web Sites

www.tdprs.state.tx.us	Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services
www.adoptchildren.org	Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE)
www.texasrunaway.org	Texas Runaway Hotline
www.texasyouth.org	Texas Youth Hotline
www.itsuptoyou.org	Child Abuse Prevention
www.notforgotten.org	Adult Abuse Prevention
www.rainbowrooms.org	Rainbow Rooms
www.txchildcaresearch.org	Child-Care Solutions

Agency Address

Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services	
P.O. Box 149030	701 W. 51st St.
Austin, TX 78714-9030	Austin, TX 78751
(512) 438-4800	