



## Executive Summary

**T**he mission of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), formerly known as the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS), is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

For the time period covered by this report, the agency was led by a six-member rule-making board, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate. Currently, the DFPS commissioner is chosen by the executive commissioner of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and directs almost 6,700 employees in five administrative districts and a state headquarters in Austin. Four major programs make up DFPS: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

## Cross Program Initiatives

- ◆ **Child Protective Services and Adult Protective Services** redesigned the computer-based reporting system for abuse and neglect (called the Child and Adult Protective System or CAPS) to a web browser-based application that increases usability and provides a platform for the future of child welfare, adult protective services, and case management. The new system, which was implemented in 2003, is called Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT).
- ◆ The Advancing Residential Childcare (ARC) Project is a joint initiative of the Health and Human Services Commission and DFPS that began work in December 2002. The ARC Project is dedicated to evaluating and improving the Texas foster care system. With the assistance of DFPS

staff, child-care providers, children's advocates, and many other stakeholders, the ARC Project is working to achieve these goals:

- Implement an integrated philosophy and approach to residential child-care centered on individual child needs.
- Improve and streamline the monitoring of foster families, residential child-care agencies, and residential contract providers.
- Promote the development of best practices in residential child-care services.
- Use outcomes to improve the system of care in Texas.

During the first year, the ARC Project led the effort to convert the level of care descriptions of a child's behavior into a description of the child's needs. These four new service levels were included in the residential services contracts effective September 2003. The ARC Project is currently working on revising the residential child care standards and identifying outcomes measures for children in care related to safety, permanency, and well-being.

## Child Protective Services (CPS)

- ◆ In 2003, CPS saw positive results from ongoing efforts to reduce turnover of CPS caseworkers.
- ◆ CPS began a new, collaborative effort with the support of the Casey Family Program to foster cooperation, collaboration, and communication between agency staff and families who come into the CPS system. Through this process, which is known as family group decision making, families who become involved with CPS work with staff to help correct the problems that led to their children coming into the state's conservatorship.

## Adult Protective Services (APS)

- ◆ APS worked with the Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute, a unique collaboration with the Baylor College of Medicine Geriatrics Program and the Harris County Hospital District, to develop a fatality review team in Houston.
- ◆ APS developed a new system for prioritizing investigations in MHMR settings, worked with the Protective Services Training Institute of Texas to implement a certification program for field workers, and strengthened its quality assurance program to better evaluate the quality of services it provides to its clients.

## Child Care Licensing (CCL)

- ◆ In 2003, Child Care Licensing revised minimum standards for child day-care centers. The new standards, which were adopted following an extensive public review period, were also rewritten into an easy-to-understand question-and-answer format designed to improve compliance and reduce mistakes.
- ◆ To increase efficiency, CCL implemented policies that eliminate the duplication of sanitation and fire inspections conducted by local political subdivisions in day-care centers and revised its application policies to process new applications when a child placing agency changes locations.

## Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)

- ◆ PEI completed its first statewide inventory of prevention service providers during 2003. The inventory contains the names of, and contact information for, hundreds of organizations and agencies that provide services to prevent child abuse, juvenile delinquency, and academic failure.
- ◆ PEI collaborated with Austin-based Family Forward to provide a statewide primary prevention services program. Family Forward used materials created by DFPS for its 2000-2002 “It’s Up To You” child abuse prevention campaign.

## Ombudsman’s Office

- ◆ DFPS has a strong impact in the lives of the people we serve. When clients have case-specific complaints about our actions, they may contact our Ombudsman’s Office (now known as the Office of Consumer Affairs) 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, DFPS offers a variety of solutions such as administrative reviews, hearings, and mediation.

During Fiscal Year 2003, the Ombudsman’s Office received 8,347 contacts from various sources including the public, consumers, elected officials, other agencies, and DFPS staff. Of the total contacts received, 2,821 were handled as case-specific complaints or legislative inquiries. The validation rate of complaints has consistently been 4 percent for the past several years.



## 2003 Budget Shortfall and Reorganization of Health and Human Services Agencies

In 2003, Texas government changed the way its state agencies provide health and human services. The changes were due to two separate but related events: A funding shortfall in general revenue that affected all state government, and a reorganization of health and human services agencies due to the enactment of House Bill 2292, 78th Texas Legislature, Regular Session.

As directed by the Texas Legislature, PRS began 2003 by developing a budget from the ground up based on a reduced general revenue amount determined by the Legislative Budget Board, which was about 12.5 percent less than the previous biennium. As a result of the budget process, the agency reduced staffing in the areas of administration and support.

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The appropriation for Child Protective Services staff who deliver services directly was increased to account for anticipated increases in caseloads during the next biennium. At the same time, the appropriation for foster care reimbursement and adoption subsidies increased 5.1 percent from 2003—less than cost projections—and CPS purchased services' appropriation was reduced 7.5 percent from the 2003 level.

The appropriation for Adult Protective Services in home services was reduced by less than 1 percent, but with anticipated caseload increases in 2004 and 2005, caseworkers are expected to take on larger caseloads. One section of APS experienced a more substantial reduction: MHMR investigations, an area whose appropriation was reduced 25.7 percent from the 2003 level. The impact of that reduction may mean slower response time to non-priority cases, and increased workload for staff investigators who perform these investigations.

The agency's Child Care Licensing budget was reduced by 8 percent overall. Impact of that reduction may mean fewer staff and less frequent inspections for the roughly 24,000 Texas child-care facilities regularly inspected.

The Prevention and Early Intervention division's overall appropriation was reduced 24 percent. As a result, the following programs ceased to be funded: Healthy Families, Family Outreach, At-Risk Mentoring, Home Instruction Program for Pre-school Youngsters, Second Chance, and Parents as Teachers. Services to At Risk Youth, Community Youth Development, and the Texas Youth and Runaway Hotlines had their budgets reduced by 16 percent each. The Buffalo Soldiers program received zero funding, but the agency received legislative direction to fund that program from monies within the PEI budget up to \$250,000. The Communities In Schools program saw its \$17.6 million budget slightly increased, however, that program moved to the Texas Education Agency effective Sept. 1, 2003.

House Bill 2292 consolidated the number of health and human services agencies from 12 to four under the direction of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. Through House Bill 2292, Texas health and human services agencies began mid-2003 to consolidate organizational structures and functions, eliminate duplicative administrative systems, and streamline processes and procedures. The legislation also renamed the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) as the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), with a name change effective February 1, 2004. ■



In 2003, Statewide Intake enhanced the secure web site for receiving non-emergency reports of child abuse and neglect. Originally launched in 2002 for use only by teachers, the site was expanded to include all professionals reporting abuse or neglect to CPS as required by the Texas Family Code 261.101. Professionals required to report include teachers, nurses, doctors, attorneys, day-care employees, clergy, medical practitioners, social workers, mental health professionals, employees of clinics or health care facilities that provide reproductive services, law enforcement, juvenile probation officers, and juvenile detention or correctional officers.

Comments from professionals using the web site have been generally very positive. One person shared, "This type reporting screen allowed me to complete the report very confidentially. I have many interruptions and to be able to take care of the students' needs and come right back and continue where I left off was a tremendous blessing. Thank you for the quick responses. We appreciate all that you do for our children." Another said, "I appreciate this opportunity to have a quiet way to inform CPS of suspected abuse. A telephone call is easily overheard in our offices by other co-workers or our clients."

During Fiscal Year 2003, CPS received close to 12,000 web-based reports, an increase of about 34 percent from Fiscal Year 2002. In Fiscal Year 2004, the agency plans to expand the web site to non-emergency reports of abuse/neglect/exploitation for elderly/disabled adults and launch public awareness efforts about the web site to professional organizations and associations.