

## Child Welfare: The Role of Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults in SB 6

**Position Statement approved by One Voice: March 29, 2006**

**Issue/Concern:** SB 6 of the 79<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature provides for the outsourcing of certain child protective services functions that are currently provided by the state. Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults also provides essential case management and substitute care services; however, the county's authority to continue as a "provider of services" under the new law is not clear.

### Specific Policy Recommendation(s):

- ★ Support language that would affirm Harris County's legal authority to provide case management, and/or substitute care services for the benefit of children, who are in the protective custody and care of the state, and their families.

**How does this issue/recommendation relate to prevention and early intervention or maximizing federal funds for health and human services?** Harris County Protective Services for Children and Adults provides over \$4.7 million of support services for the benefit of children and families who are clients of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). These value-added services, intended to prevent the need for more expensive longer-term services and to produce better outcomes for children, are in addition to those provided by DFPS to children in substitute care. Additionally, county and private resources fund important capital projects such as The Children's Assessment Center and the recently completed Youth Services Center, where many of these services are provided. If Harris County lacked the legal authority to continue to provide these child protective services functions, the related support and funding would no longer be available to the State to leverage Title IV E federal funds.

### Supporting Facts/Research/Resources:

- ★ The current array of services has been developed through a nearly forty year state/county partnership that has resulted in the most developed local support system in Texas.
- ★ DFPS' vision of system reform that is "achieved through fully engaging public and private sector resources" does not necessitate the dismantling of forty years of county infrastructure and millions of dollars that fund it.
- ★ If this specific authority is not affirmed, these funds and related federal monies could be entirely lost to the system.

**Legislative Outcome:** (1) Harris County can be a provider in any outsourced system. (2) The outsourcing provisions were largely reversed, although a pilot project will enable child placement agencies to provide case management services to five percent of the substitute care cases.

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Adoptation  
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