



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Contact: mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov, (212) 341-0999

ACS: INDEPENDENT MONITOR'S REPORT SHOWS "THE STEPS WE'VE BEEN TAKING ARE THE RIGHT ONES"

Report notes that ACS is at the forefront of child welfare agencies nationwide, and says ACS is already implementing its recommendations

New York, NY—New York City's Administration for Children's Services today said a report from the independent monitor selected by the State to review its child protective and preventive programs is thorough and useful—and that it confirms that reforms the agency has been making over the last nine months are appropriate.

In 2016, the State of New York decided to appoint an independent monitor to review ACS's child protective and preventive programs. In February 2017, Kroll Associates was selected to conduct the assessment. Shortly thereafter, in March 2017, David A. Hansell was appointed Commissioner of ACS, and he began to implement critical reforms—based on rigorous analysis of data—to increase effectiveness, accountability, and transparency across the agency

The report notes: "Under Commissioner Hansell's leadership, ACS has already begun implementing the recommendations discussed in this report."

The report also says: "From a national perspective, ACS is at the forefront of child welfare agencies in its development of preventive services, evidence-based modeling, clinical consultations, and predictive analysis."

ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell said: "This is a thorough and useful report, and we are very pleased with it. Over the last nine months, the Administration for Children's Services has made critical reforms to protect the safety and well-being of New York City's children, and this report shows that the steps we've been taking are the right ones."

In the last nine months, under Commissioner Hansell's leadership, ACS has made dozens of critical reforms in key areas, including:

- Strengthened oversight, infrastructure, and protocols for child-protective case management. ACS relaunched CHILD-STAT reviews of high-risk cases, launched a Quality Assurance Unit to improve child-protective case work, began tracking the timely completion of case data, expanded managerial and frontline staff training, and developed a new Case Assignment System.
- Created a new Chief Accountability Officer position and implemented stronger protocols for investigations and tighter coordination across divisions.
- Expanded coordination and training with the NYPD and increased the number of Investigative Consultants (retired NYPD detectives) to review cases and assist in investigations. There are now 173 Investigative Consultants on staff at ACS (a 26% increase since March), and under a new Heightened Oversight Protocol they are more involved in sensitive cases.
- Strengthened case counseling to bring together families, staff, and important people in a child's life. These conferences are now mandatory in preventive cases, additional conference facilitators have been hired, and a new database has been created to provide information for conferences.
- Provided mobile devices to frontline staff, launched an app that Child Protective Specialists can use to summon emergency help, and a created new dashboard that pulls data from multiple sources to help staff make assessments.
- Coordinated with schools to identify children at higher risk of maltreatment, with stronger protocols and new training conducted jointly with the Department of Education.
- Expanded preventive services, including intensive family therapy, in-home services, and monitoring for child safety. ACS expanded the number of slots available for preventive services by 22% this year and eliminated the waitlist for services.

As a result of these reforms, ACS has strengthened its child-protective work while expanding its preventive work.

Over the last year, ACS provided training to more than 4,000 frontline child-protective staff. This week, ACS released data showing that in FY2017, the number of children in foster care in New York City reached a historic low, as the result of a robust new strategy, investment by the City, innovative programs, and strong partnerships with local providers. Caseloads for both foster care agencies and ACS Child Protective Specialists are under 12, a key measure in line with best practices. Notes in supervisory reviews of child-protective investigations were entered on time in 97.3% of investigations in FY2017.

To view the Kroll Associates report, click here: <http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2017-NYC-ACS-Report-Kroll.pdf>.

To view more background on reforms ACS has implemented over the last nine months, click here: <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/acs/pdf/PressReleases/2017/Overviewofreformslastninemonths.pdf>.

###