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**AS PART OF ONGOING SAFETY REFORMS, ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES GREATLY EXPANDS 'EMERGENCY SERVICES UNIT;' NEW YORK CITY'S 'GUARDIANS OF THE NIGHT' INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT DURING OVERNIGHT & WEEKEND HOURS**

*More Than Half of the Agency's 60,000 Annual Reports Are Investigated by Emergency Children's Services*

*ACS Emergency Children's Services Unit Has Doubled in Size, Meaning Faster and More Robust Investigations*

NEW YORK, NY - NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today announced that ACS has completed an expansion of the Emergency Children's Services Unit, which responds to reports of abuse or neglect at night, and on weekends and holidays. Those child protective workers, also known as "guardians of the night," respond to reports of child abuse and neglect within New York City throughout all hours of the night. Since the beginning of last year, the Emergency Children's Services unit has doubled in size, from approximately 60 to 120 frontline child welfare workers.

"While everyone else is sleeping, our 'guardians of the night' frontline workers at ACS are working hard to make sure kids are safe and families have the support they need," **said ACS Commissioner Hansell.** "The Emergency Children's Services unit investigates tens of thousands of reports of child abuse and neglect each year and we need to make sure they have the support they need to fulfil that critical mission. The expansion of the Emergency Children's Services unit helps us protect New York City's children by conducting faster and more robust investigations, 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

The ACS Division of Child Protection (DCP) investigates all allegations of child abuse and neglect that the City receives from the New York Statewide Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. Each year the division investigates about 60,000 reported cases. The Division includes child protective borough offices made up of child protective specialists who investigate reported cases of abuse and neglect as well as an Emergency Children's Services unit, which provides investigative coverage during evenings, holidays and weekends.

As of November 13<sup>th</sup>, ECS had investigated 28,564 reports of child abuse and neglect, or 50.4 percent of total reports in New York City. CPS at the ECS unit investigate approximately 2,800 cases each month, or 714 cases per week. As soon as the 9am-5pm workday begins, the ECS unit hands off their cases to the appropriate field office.

ECS staff work staggered shifts to ensure that reports are investigated around the clock. On evening shifts during the week, some start at 4pm and 5pm and 6pm, and others begin at 8pm, 10pm and 12am. ECS workers also manage reports received during the week and the weekend that require additional follow up from the borough offices.

Almost immediately after being appointed, Commissioner Hansell visited all CPS field offices within ACS, including the Emergency Children's Services unit where he shadowed a CPS team in the field on a nighttime shift. Commissioner Hansell immediately recognized that ECS staff were overburdened and under-resourced and therefore, made it a priority to strengthen the unit. In addition to doubling the size of the unit, ACS implemented the ECS Application Unit, which includes a more robust system to assign SCR reports in a timely fashion and request for background information on each case before the CPS meet with families. After being appointed, Commissioner Hansell recognized that ECS was the only ACS field office without access to a dedicated applications unit and therefore, made it a priority to implement one. The ECS Application Unit is comprised of approximately 35 child welfare staff who are specifically trained in completing electronic clearances on a family's ACS history and Public Assistance history, which allows CPS to have this important information before meeting with them.

At the start of each shift, workers secure transportation by submitting electronic requests through newly implemented LocalMotion technology, which is one of several transportation options including access to Zipcars and ACS vehicles. Cases are then assigned to staff and reviewed with a supervisor. Workers are also required to contact the source of a SCR report unless the claim was made anonymously. The child protective workers then go out in pairs to conduct investigations. ECS workers offer a range of services from providing domestic violence service information, to providing smoke detectors and cribs to families, to removing children in rare instances where that is necessary to protect them from physical or sexual abuse. After each visit, a review is held with the supervisor before proceeding to the next case.

Since taking office as ACS Commissioner last year, Hansell has made widespread reforms to strengthen the agency's protective and preventive work, including:

- Re-launched CHILD-STAT quality improvement process, a regular review of high-risk cases under current investigation and an analysis of performance data.
- Created a new Quality Assurance Unit to improve case practice on investigations involving high-risk families.
- Hired more than 600 new Child Protective Specialists.
- Strengthened infrastructure to support child protective work, including additional transportation options and the use of ZipCar's "local motion technology," allowing

CPS the ability to find and reserve cars online so that they can respond even more quickly to reports of child abuse and neglect.

- Provided more than 2,000 frontline child welfare workers upgraded technology, including high-speed tablets and “Safe Measures” software, which can automatically identify and flag high-risk cases that need additional review by managerial staff.
- Enhanced review protocols by implementing a new Heightened Oversight Protocol on SCR reports involving alleged physical or sexual abuse of a child under the age of three.
- Increased collaboration with other agencies that can partner in investigations and in getting supportive services to families, including the Department of Education, Department of Homeless Services and NYPD.

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