



Nurse-Family Partnership Testimony

Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report for the Department of Family and Protective Services

June 25, 2014

My name is Erica Lee Carter and I am the Texas State Lead for Nurse-Family Partnership. Thank you for providing thoughtful recommendations to improve the support for children and families involved with the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). As part of the system of prevention and care, Nurse-Family Partnership agrees that many of your recommendations will lead to a stronger overall system to support Texas families. However, Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) through this testimony will offer our perspective regarding the recommendations from the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report to align nearly all prevention services under the umbrella of DFPS. Our comments are specific to:

Recommendation 6.2 – *Transfer the Nurse Family Partnership Program to DFPS.*

Recommendation 6.3 – *Direct HHSC to work with DFPS to transfer the federally funded Texas Home Visiting Program to DFPS.*

The recommendations related to prevention services were made with good intentions; but, based on the current structure and success of the system as is they could cause disruption and impact service delivery within a system of support and prevention that has been built thus far throughout Texas using evidenced-based home visitation.

The Nurse-Family Partnership national model of preventative services in Texas was established by SB156 in 2007 to promote strong families and healthy children. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) was carefully selected with the foresight and insight of the sponsoring legislators to manage, monitor and sustain this evidenced-based model for families across Texas. HHSC has managed the successful implementation of the NFP model to date and added a well-defined infrastructure to ensure sustainability and efficient operations. Within the State of Texas structure of prevention services for families, NFP believes that remaining under the umbrella of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is critical to continue to effectively serve Texas families and achieve the desired outcomes.

Since 2008, Nurse-Family Partnership has worked to strengthen over 6,800 Texas families in the areas of maternal and infant health, child development and education to name a few. Under the guidance of HHSC, NFP has addressed numerous health and human services, educational,

as well CPS could be hindered if placed under the same management. As home visitors, our NFP nurses are considered a stable support for the family and when potential maltreatment cases arise, the trust they have built over time adds great value to the process. Our nurses intend to continue this partnership with CPS and look forward to collaborating closely to provide additional support for families in need. In the 43 states in which Nurse-Family Partnership operates, we are affiliated with the health or public health agency in the majority of them. We believe that the original legislation to establish NFP under the leadership of the Health in Human Services Commission got it right the first time. For the continued effectiveness and success of home visitation models like Nurse-Family Partnership and the Texas Home Visitation Program, these prevention models should continue to operate under the management of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

Submitted:

Erica Lee Carter, Texas

Erica.Lee@nursefamilypartnership.org