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The Texas Home Visitation Consortium
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Texas Sunset Advisory Commission
1501 North Congress Avenue, 6th Floor, Robert E. Johnson Bldg.
Austin, TX 78701

June 25, 2014

Dear Sunset Advisory Commission Members:
The Texas Home Visitation Consortium would like to express concern regarding the following recommendations from the Sunset Advisory Commission Staff Report for the Department of Family and Protective Services, released May of 2014.

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 Consortium would like to recommend that the Texas Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP) and the Texas Home Visiting Program (THVP) both remain under the auspices and management of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission:

1. Family Support home visiting programs currently managed by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) address numerous health and human services, educational, occupational and economic issues facing vulnerable families. The range of services offered reflect a two-generation and holistic approach to multiple high-risk family challenges, but that which is not focused exclusively on child abuse and neglect prevention. Although reducing maltreatment is a component of many of the programs, all the models have additional and broader program goals to improve the overall well-being and functioning of the child and family, which focus on outcomes that cross many domains, including: enhancing maternal and child health, improving cognitive development and school

Madeline McClure
Executive Director

had the sole responsibility of conducting the Texas Needs Assessment, applying for formula and competitive funding, interacting continually with the Federal program developers and creating trusting relationship with our federal partners. HHSC has been an excellent partner in providing legislators education to back the advocacy for reauthorizing the program. The Texas HVC believes that transferring this considerable responsibility to DFPS during this critical period could create instability, a loss of continuity and opportunity at a time where there is no room for error.

Texas Home Visitation Consortium Recommendation:

The HVC's recommendation is to keep both Nurse-Family Partnership and the Texas Home Visiting Program under the current implementing agency, HHSC. However, we encourage the use of home visiting services under DFPS and more specifically, the PEI division for those families who come to the attention of DFPS and need more intensive services. A distinction should be made however, between the provision of primary prevention family support home visiting services (currently under HHSC, including NFP) and the remedial intervention home visiting services that often are used in conjunction with other support services for families that have been involved in CPS. Home visiting is not a program, rather a service of delivery and therefore this distinction is key. The remedial home visiting programs currently under DFPS, including services within Family Based Safety Services, the proposed alternative response (AR) programs as well as the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) and Home Intervention and Prevention (HIP) programs, provide families in the CPS system (or at the cusp of entry) with much needed support and are essential to rehabilitating families. For these families, home visiting can serve as an important component. Alternatively, the programs operating under HHSC are meant to serve as primary prevention parenting and child development education, well-baby care and coaching for new parents and families to make better life choices-serving those whose path has never crossed into child protective services.

Sincerely,

Madeline McClure, TexProtects and
The Texas Home Visitation Consortium

Mission of the Texas Home Visitation Consortium: To bring together Texas home visitation programs to increase the awareness of home visitation in Texas and to coordinate legislative efforts.

Enclosure