2nd Quarter FY 2006 April 1, 2006

Executive Summary

In April 2004, Executive Order RP 33 instructed the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to investigate and conduct systemic reform of the state's Adult Protective Services (APS) program. In November of 2004, the Governor's Office and HHSC published a report outlining 252 corrective actions intended to bring about system wide program reform. In June of 2005, the 79th Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 6 into law. Statutory language in the bill aligned with a number of corrective actions outlined in the Governor's report, including a significant emphasis on the development of a new APS performance management system. The following report provides an overview of APS reform actions taken to date as well as an overview of the new APS performance management system.

As of April 1, 2006, 93 percent of the APS reform items have been completed.

APS Reform Accomplishments for FY 2004 – 2005

Training and Staff Skill Development:

The goal is to improve caseworkers' knowledge and skills resulting in better case decisions and enhanced outcomes for clients.

- The APS basic training program expanded from three weeks to 11 weeks in order to ensure staff received comprehensive training before conducting an investigation.

- APS initiated the comprehensive Blended Learning for APS In-Home Skills Training, which incorporates web-based training, classroom training and on-the-job training. Staff have the opportunity to learn basic information via web-based training, enabling classroom trainers to focus on advanced skill sets.

- The initial few months of employment are critical to developing quality caseworker practices and enhancing staff retention. Nine field trainers were employed to supervise new employees during their on-the-job training phase in order to ensure staff receive individual attention.

- Staff receive an additional three weeks of advanced classroom training in the first year that focuses on advanced skills.

- In order to ensure ongoing knowledge and skill development of tenured staff, APS requires 18 hours per year of continuing education training for all direct delivery staff and supervisors.

- Comprehensive training on risk assessment and mobile technology were provided to address program enhancements as a result of APS Reform.

Guardianship:

The Guardianship program transfer eliminates conflict of interest and increases safety and systems of care for clients.

- The guardianship program was transferred to the Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) on September 1, 2005.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed between the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and DADS. The MOU defines roles and responsibilities of each agency to ensure clients receive necessary services in a timely manner.

- DFPS and DADS have convened a regularly scheduled workgroup to resolve ongoing issues involved in the inter-agency referral process.

Staffing:

Additional resources allocated to the APS program in order to facilitate manageable caseloads and enhance client outcomes.

- APS program hired additional full-time equivalents (FTEs) allocated for fiscal years 2005-2006.

- Pre-screening and a realistic job preview were instituted to ensure that applicants most likely to succeed in a particular position are selected for an interview.

- The interview process was standardized for direct delivery staff.

- An education stipend is available to all APS staff. The stipend motivates workers to attain a higher level of education in APS-related fields and encourages workforce retention.

Technological Innovation:

Increases caseworker efficiency and improves client outcomes through effective assessment, consultation and documentation.

- DFPS in conjunction with HHSC have developed a mobile office model that incorporates the use of tablet PCs. All direct delivery staff in the APS in-home and APS facility programs were given tablet PCs and digital cameras. Efficient and effective protective services are dependent on a caseworker's ability to work independent of a standard office environment.

- Mobile Protective Services (MPS) software was developed enabling caseworkers to document case activities into their tablet PCs when they are in their mobile office environment. Upon returning to the office or using wireless connectivity, workers can transfer data from their tablet into the IMPACT database. IMPACT is the database used by DFPS to collect and store data regarding APS clients.

- The IMPACT database was revised to accommodate the new risk assessment tool.

Community Engagement:

APS community engagement efforts are necessary to enhance public awareness and community participation in an attempt to improve client's safety and well-being.

- Community Initiative Specialists positions were hired in each region to work in collaboration with the civic and volunteer communities. These staff work in partnership with volunteers in local communities and assist community organizations that are striving to develop diverse community boards in each region.

- Resource and External Relations Specialists were hired in each region to focus on coordination with the service and provider communities to increase access to services such as home repair and payment assistance with medication and utilities. Many APS clients do not have the means to locate these resources without APS assistance.

- Identified priority needs and created community action plans in each region to address community education and resource development.

- Developed a public awareness campaign to increase the public's understanding of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly and adults with disabilities, to be delivered in collaboration with public and private partnerships.

Client Outcomes:

Outcomes for clients are enhanced as a result of the systemic reform of the APS program. New assessment tools, clinical expertise, and quality assurance provisions help ensure client safety and well-being.

- APS in conjunction with HHSC developed a risk assessment tool that evaluates five domains related to client safety and well-being. The tool assesses a client's living condition, medical status, mental status, financial status and social support system.

- Experts in exploitation and evidence-driven investigations were employed in each region. Investigations involving exploitation require advanced skills in financial accounting and legal documentation. Evidence-driven investigations require highly developed knowledge of procedures for evidence collection and interviewing procedures.

- Experts in self-neglect were employed in each region. These individuals have advanced skills in determining when to refer a client for a medical evaluation based on the client's behavior or physical surroundings. Specialists in self-neglect receive advanced training in order to deal with clients who hoard possessions or animals.

- HHSC contracted with the Center for Social Work Research at UT Austin to perform an independent evaluation of the risk assessment tool. The evaluation will provide APS management with information regarding the reliability and validity of the risk assessment tool.

Performance Management:

APS has developed a Performance Management System to monitor case quality. Performance data will be used to inform policy and training in order to improve case outcomes for clients.

- Five full-time case readers employed to review case quality in each region. Quality assurance data trends will be provided to APS management in order to inform decisions regarding policy and training.

- Mandatory supervisor review of all cases before closure to ensure that all aspects of an investigation and/or services delivered were adequately addressed by the caseworker.

- APS has developed employee performance measures for all APS staff. These measures will be utilized in staff performance evaluations in order to retain competent staff and take corrective action when staff are not meeting management's expectations.

APS Reform Initiatives in Progress FY 2005 – 2006

Training:

- APS is in the process of implementing the Senate Bill 6 requirement for annual training. All APS caseworkers will attend an annual training class that covers changes to program policy and enabling legislation.

- Training for facility staff is being updated in order to incorporate the Blended Learning for APS In-Home Skills Training model used for in-home training.

- APS will continue to examine various ways that web-based training can be utilized and evaluate the overall efficacy of web-based training in comparison to classroom training.

Staffing:

- DFPS is working to enhance current retention efforts aimed at APS field staff.

APS Reform Challenges

The APS Program is experiencing growth in reports of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation, which is impacting the average daily caseload per caseworker. In November of 2004, APS was projected to experience a five percent growth in reports of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation for FY 2006. In November of 2005, the original projections for FY 2006 were updated and the growth rate was revised to 10.2 percent or double the growth rate estimated in early FY 2005. The change in projected growth results in an average daily caseload of 47.6 for FY 2006 instead of an average daily caseload of 29, which was forecasted in FY 2005.

As caseworkers manage higher caseloads, the amount of time it takes to complete an investigation increases and the number of pending investigations also rises. In FY 2005, the average number of investigations pending in any given month was 10,430 as compared to 6,907 in FY 2004. The average pending for the first six months of FY 2006 was 12,631. The time it takes to complete an investigation is one of the main drivers for calculating the average daily caseload per caseworker.

Retaining qualified staff is of major concern when workloads become difficult for staff to manage. While APS staff turnover has decreased during the second quarter of FY 2006 it remains an on-going challenge for the APS program in managing caseloads, training needs, client outcomes and program accountability.

As of December 2005, all APS caseworkers have tablet PCs, making the mobile work environment a reality. DFPS Information Technology and the APS Program are working diligently to resolve software and hardware issues associated with the new work environment. Based on information gathered from the mobile technology survey, APS has established "skilled users" in each region to support workers and developed training that addresses technology topics, best practices, tools and tips. While mobile technology has resulted in a significant cultural shift in their day-to-day activities, caseworkers are adapting to the new work environment.

Significant Accomplishments for the Reporting Period

1st Quarter

- Tablet PCs distributed to all direct delivery staff in the APS in-home program.
- Tablet PCS distributed to all direct delivery staff in the APS facility program.
- Guardianship MOU developed between DFPS and DADS.
- Full roll-out of comprehensive Blended Learning for APS In-Home Skills Training, which incorporates web-based training, classroom training and on-the-job training.
- Comprehensive training on use of tablet PC technology.
- Hired 25 new direct delivery staff appropriated for FY 2006. (57 FTEs were allocated in FY 2005)
- Implementation of comprehensive performance management standards.

2nd Quarter

- Tablet PC users were surveyed to gather information on the strengths and challenges associated with the new technology.
- Based on the survey results, APS and DFPS Information Technology have developed a cultural change management plan, which includes an intranet site for tablet PCs, web-based training, job aides, and identification of skilled users to work with employees in small groups.
- The Special Task Unit manual and tool kit was completed and distributed to the community engagement staff in each region. These staff are meeting with local government officials in counties with a population of 250,000 or more in order to facilitate compliance with Senate Bill 6.
- APS staff met with staff from the Higher Education Coordinating Board and received a commitment from THCB to work with institutions of higher education to offer curricula related to protective

services for elderly and disabled adults through the social work and psychology departments.

- The Center for Policy, Innovation and Professional Development refined and integrated the blended-learning training for newly hired APS in-home caseworkers by aligning the content with training goals and objectives, as well as program expectations. Improved pre- test/post-test scores have indicated preliminary success in achieving measurable learning through this training alignment

- Center for Program Coordination staff trained APS supervisors in each region on the new APS Performance Management System. APS supervisors now have daily reports available on-line to monitor caseloads and case quality.

Overview of APS Performance Management System

The Governor's APS Reform Reports and Senate Bill 6 cited a lack of effective performance management within the APS Program. According to the Governor's November 2004 report, one of the APS program's primary problems was a lack of accountability. Workers, supervisors and managers within the program did not receive sufficient feedback on job performance and there were no consequences for poor casework. In order to address the concerns stated above, APS staff worked with other divisions within DFPS to develop a meaningful outcome-based performance management system.

Some core assumptions drove the development of the APS performance management system.

1) Accountability should be driven by the mission of APS and centered on positive client outcomes;

2) Quality follows critical inquiry and a commitment on the part of staff at all levels;

3) Expectations of all employees need to be clearly defined and commonly understood;

4) Individual accountability should be accompanied with resources directed to building the capacity and skills of individual staff; and

5) Measuring performance is an ongoing, evolutionary process that should contribute to the improvement of investigation, service delivery and overall client outcomes.

APS employees from all levels were brought in from across the state to participate in development of consistent performance standards. The result is a system that balances quantitative data regarding timeliness and worker efficiency with qualitative information gathered from detailed case reading. Additional measures were applied to managers regarding effective deployment of program resources and community engagement.

Quantitative information is gathered via the IMPACT case management system. Five staff from state office are dedicated to reading cases full-time in order to gather the qualitative data used to manage performance. The cases are scored according to a consistent set of standards. These scores are tabulated and reported to regional and state office management. In addition to state office case readers, regional staff review cases in preparation for regional case readings, which involve staff from state office and the regions. Cases are scored using the same case reading standards and results are reported to regional and state office management.

Senate Bill 6 also provides guidance to the DFPS' Statewide Intake program, which serves as the initial point of contact for reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Statewide Intake quality assurance activities include:

1) Developing and implementing effective techniques for evaluating the Statewide Intake program;

2) Reviewing IMPACT reports and call recordings to collect performance data, identify adverse trends, and determine compliance with policy, laws, regulations and service delivery standards; and

3) Providing written feedback via automated Quality Monitoring System regarding how intake workers meet performance standards in obtaining, assessing and documenting information obtained from reporters.

The performance management system has several components for measuring employee performance. The following table outlines measures that are used to evaluate caseworkers in the field, field supervisors, and statewide intake staff. As of December 1, 2005, the six-month and annual performance evaluations for caseworkers include the measures described in the table. Annual evaluations for field supervisors and regional management will include the new performance standards. Overall program performance is discussed at monthly DFPS executive team meetings and the APS system is being used as a model for performance management in other DFPS programs.

To address concerns about consistency in program management, standardized performance expectations have been developed for each position in the program and are delivered through performance evaluations. In addition to qualitative and quantitative measures of case quality and client outcomes, performance evaluations also include an individual supervisor's assessment of skills or "performance dimensions." The supervisor is responsible for assessing the employee's professionalism, initiative, planning and organization, decision-making, flexibility and adaptability, communication and interpersonal skills.

Performance Measure	Job Specific Standards
Caseworker	
Timeliness of 24-hour contact.	Caseworker will initiate each case within 24 hours. 94-95% is competent.
Timeliness of face-to-face contact.	Caseworker will make face-to-face contacts within policy timeframes for the priority. 89-91% is competent.
Timeliness of monthly status contact.	Caseworkers will contact client at least once a month while the case is open. 89-91% is competent.
Investigation Rating Scale from APS case reading. *(Scale is made up of 8 items captured in detailed analysis of individual cases)*	Caseworker will fully investigate allegations and all factors that present a threat to the client's health or safety. 80%-86% competent.
Process Compliance Scale from APS case reading. *(Scale is made up of 11 items captured in detailed analysis of individual cases)*	Caseworker will make all required contacts within timeframes and document all required case information. 80-86% competent.
Client Intervention Scale from APS case reading. *(Scale is made up of 10 items captured in detailed analysis of individual cases)*	Caseworker will appropriately assess and intervene in cases of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation in order to ensure that factors placing the client at risk are addressed. 80%-86% competent.
Supervisor	
Evaluations completed within timeframes.	Target percentage for a rating of competency is 90%.
Length of time for supervisors to approve cases.	Target percentage for a rating of competency is 90% of cases approved within 10 days of submission by the caseworker.
Statewide Intake	
Obtains and assesses detailed information from callers.	Intake worker obtains necessary information and assesses it for the correct program. Target for competency is 90-92 %.

Statewide Intake (cont.)	
Prioritizes reports of abuse and neglect accurately.	Intake worker chooses the correct priority based on information obtained and risk to: child(ren); elderly or adults with disabilities. Target for competency is 90-92 %.
Documentation of intake information is accurate and complete.	Intake worker records information correctly on each section of the intake according to policy/procedure requirements. Target for competency is 89-91 %.
Accurately distributes and relays reports within appropriate time frames.	Intake worker routes the intake or additional information to the correct destination workload within established time frames. Target for competency is 92-94 %.

Overview of APS Performance During the Quarter

The chart below provides an overview of the APS program's statewide performance on indicators for the first and second quarters of FY 2006, along with their benchmarks. It is important to note that the LBB Performance Measures are calculated using the date the worker completes the investigation. As a result of APS Reform, supervisors are required to approve closure of all investigations and service delivery cases. For this reason, the APS Program has begun calculating the number of APS investigations, number of confirmed investigations and days per investigation using the date the supervisor approves closure. The average number of days between a worker completing a case and the supervisor approving the case for closure is five days.

Performance Indicators	Performance Benchmarks for FY 2006	FY 2005 Actual	FY 2006				
			1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	YTD
Number of APS Reports of adult abuse/neglect /exploitation	88,771*	80,623	20,262	19,434			39,696
Average Hold Time Statewide Intake Phone Calls (English)	5.0	5.2	6.1**	7.1***			6.6
Number of Completed APS Investigations	77,963*	67,023	21,095	17,414			38,509
Average Days per Investigation Stage	50.0*	51.3	60.1	69.9			64.2
Number of Confirmed APS Investigations	53,346* (69.7%)	45,392 (67.7%)	14,512 (68.8%)	11,939 (68.6%)			26,451
Average Days per Service Delivery Stage	60.0*	50.1	62.0	63.3			62.6
Average Daily Caseload per Worker	47.6*	48.9	58.5	48.7			53.4

*   *Number based on projected forecast update (as of November 2005).*
** *1st Quarter as of December 2005.*
*** *2nd Quarter as of March 2006.*

Client-Centered Performance Measures

The chart below provides an overview of employee performance indicators for FY 2006 along with their benchmarks. All of these indicators are new and were not calculated in FY 2005. APS is meeting or exceeding the benchmarks for all measures including statewide intake, investigation, risk assessment, and delivery of protective services, except for the initial client face-to-face contact. Management believes this is primarily related to higher caseloads but will continue to explore ways to improve this performance indicator.

Performance Indicators	Performance Benchmarks	FY 2006				
		1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	YTD
Statewide Intake						
Appropriateness of worker interaction with caller.	90-92%	93.3%	93.4%			93.3%
Prioritizes reports of abuse and neglect accurately.	90-92%	95.7%	94.8%			95.1%
Documentation of intake information is accurate and complete.	89-91%	93.5%	92.4%			93.4%
Appropriateness of decision to accept an intake for investigation.	92-94%	98.3%	97.8%			97.9%
Investigation						
Percentage of cases initiated within 24 hours.	94-95%	94.4%	94.2%			94.3%
Percentage of cases in which the initial client face-to-face visit occurred within the appropriate timeframe.	89-91%	72.6%	76.3%			74.3%
Investigation Rating Scale.	80-86%	88.6%	90.9%			89.9%
Risk Assessment *						
Thoroughness of problem identification.	80-86%	94.3%	92.4%			93.4%
Adequacy of supporting documentation.	80-86%	92.8%	94.9%			93.5%
Delivery of Protective Services						
Client Intervention Scale.	80-86%	89.6%	90.7%			89.8%

* The Risk Assessment data is derived from two case reading items that pertain directly to risk assessment and are also included in the overall Investigation Rating Scale.

Staffing

The chart below provides current and historical information on average filled FTEs, vacancies and turnover. These indicators provide regional and state office management additional information, which can be used to inform variations in performance. It is important to note that vacancy rate calculations and turnover calculations are cumulative for FY 2005.

Staffing Performance Indicators	FY 2005	FY 2006				
		1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	YTD
In-home Caseworkers						
Year-to-Date Average Filled FTEs*	345.8	394.0	404.7			399.3
Turnover**	22.4%	5.9%	4.1%			9.8%
In-home Supervisors						
Year-to-Date Average Filled FTEs*	50.1	56.8	60.9			58.5
Turnover**	15.8%	0.0%	1.7%			1.7%
All In-home Program						
Total FTEs Appropriated	618.6	650.6	650.6			650.6
Year-to-Date Average Filled FTEs*	548	619.6	639.9			629.8
Turnover**	18.9%	4.7%	3.3%			7.6%
Vacancy Rate	9.3%	4.8%	1.6%			3.2%

* Average filled FTEs for FY 2005 includes additional positions allocated for APS Reform in FY 2005
** Turnover for the quarter indicates the results for that quarter only, whereas YTD turnover indicates the cumulative status for all completed quarters. The average of active employees changes very little from quarter to quarter but the number of terminated employees cumulates.