



## Executive Summary

# 2002 Executive Summary



**T**he Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) is led by a six-member rule-making board, appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate. The board also appoints an executive director who directs almost 6,700 employees in 11 administrative regions and a state headquarters in Austin. Four major programs make up PRS: Child Protective Services, Adult Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, and Prevention and Early Intervention.

The mission of PRS is to protect children, the elderly, and people with disabilities from abuse, neglect, and exploitation. As we celebrate our 10-year anniversary, now more than ever, we are focusing on the services we provide rather than the processes we use to help and protect the state's most vulnerable citizens. Everyone in the organization, from the people behind the scenes to the frontline workers, knows the importance of the work they do and how they contribute to the direct delivery of services.

Because of the nature of the agency's work, frontline staff members are daily faced with situations that are mentally, physically, and emotionally difficult. But with the support of the Governor and Texas Legislature, agency management has tried to make being a PRS employee a little easier. As a result, the agency has seen a reduction in worker turnover thanks to targeted salary increases and the ability to use technology for the benefit of our workforce.

## Child Protective Services (CPS)

CPS improved the way caseworkers provide services to families. Conscious of providing care in the least restrictive setting, staff sought more ways to provide children with more homelike settings. The program also improved the way workers assess prospective adoptive parents and increased collaborations between the public and private sectors concerning adoption.

One of the program's most significant milestones in 2002 was the national Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families. PRS was praised for a number of initiatives and will be working during the next two years to make more improvements.

## Adult Protective Services (APS)

APS continued to serve as a national model to other

adult protective services programs by working to increase public awareness efforts, as well as collaborations with outside entities to further combat the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults.

## Child Care Licensing (CCL)

CCL enhanced its Child-care Licensing Automation Support System (CLASS) to speed up the process for conducting background checks and increase the amount of child-care information accessible to the public through the agency's web site. The program also increased its outreach efforts to minority communities and worked with outside entities to develop and promote an interactive, informational CD-ROM distributed to the more than 23,000 child-care providers across Texas.

## Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI)

PEI works with Texas communities to prevent child abuse, delinquency, running away, truancy, and dropping out of school. For the first time ever, the program brought together contracted providers from across the state that deliver services to share their knowledge and experience. The program also increased collaborative efforts to prevent child abuse and coordinate services for youth in crisis.

## Ombudsman

PRS has an impact in the lives of the people we serve. When they disagree with our actions, they may contact our Ombudsman's Office at **1-800-720-7777** for an impartial review of their case. The review determines whether the agency's policies have been followed properly. If corrective action is needed, PRS may offer a variety of solutions such as administrative reviews, hearings, and mediation.

During 2002, the Ombudsman's Office received 6,551 inquiries from various sources including the public, consumers, elected officials, other agencies, and PRS staff. Of the total inquiries received, 2,592 were handled as complaints, meaning the situation was reviewed by researching in our automated system, requesting information from regional administrators, determining if the specific program followed policy and procedure, and providing feedback to the complainant. The validation rate of complaints has consistently been 4 percent for the past several years.