

Presentation to
Senate Health & Human
Services Committee

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- ▶ 11 years as Executive Director of the Fannin County Children's Center
- ▶ Center includes both CASA and Children's Advocacy Center
- ▶ In Bonham – population about 10,000
- ▶ In Fannin County – population about 33,000
- ▶ Adjacent the Red River and the counties of Grayson, Collin, Hunt & Lamar

CPS Supervision is Specialized

- ▶ Specialization of CPS workers & supervisors – works well in urban areas, presents many challenges in the rural areas
- ▶ Specialization = Stage of Service
 - ? Investigations (INV)
 - ? Family Based Safety Services (FBSS)
 - ? Conservatorship (CVS)

CPS Unit

- ▶ One CPS Unit includes:
 - ? 1 supervisor
 - ? 5~7 workers
 - ? 1 case aide
 - ? 1 secretary
- ▶ Everyone in the unit only works in one, specialized area (INV, CVS or FBSS)

For example, in Fannin County

- ▶ 5 workers, supervised by 4 different people
 - 2 investigators, in 2 different units – supervisors, case aides, secretaries and other workers are in Greenville (about 45 minutes away, to the east, in Hunt County)
 - 2 conservatorship workers, in 1 unit – supervisor, case aide and secretary are in Sherman (about 30 minutes away, to the west, in Grayson County) (at times, the rest of their unit has been in Plano, about 60 minutes away, to the south, in Collin County)
 - 1 family based safety specialist worker, in 1 unit – supervisor is in Sherman; rest of unit is in Sherman or Greenville (in Hunt and Grayson Counties)

Challenges

- ▶ Workers see their supervisor 1 - 5 times a month, on average
- ▶ Supervisors rarely can observe their workers interacting with clients
- ▶ Workers or supervisors spend 1 - 2 hours driving round trip to see one another (costing the state mileage and valuable staff time)

Challenges

- ▶ Workers get little to no assistance or support from their unit's case aide, secretary or peers
- ▶ Workers feel isolated, have minimal contact with their peers in their unit
- ▶ Keeping the office staffed – workers often need to be in the field, with no single supervisor to coordinate who will be in the office, often no one is in the office

Challenges

- ▶ Workers can easily be overwhelmed in doing removals without any direct assistance from the rest of their unit; there is a long list of tasks to complete in first 24-72 hours; rural workers are often left to complete them all by themselves

Challenges

- ▶ Outside agencies (law enforcement, courts, CASA, Children's Advocacy Centers, schools, etc)
 - ? Struggle to build working relationships with CPS supervisors since they rarely see one another
 - ? Often sense that supervisors are not invested in the community, since they do not spend much time here

Possible Solutions

- ▶ In rural areas, allow for generic or blended units, in an office together
 - ? 1 Supervisor
 - ? 5~7 workers (INV, CVS & FBSS)
 - ? 1 Case aide
 - ? 1 Secretary
- ▶ In urban or larger areas, continue to have specialized units

Possible Solutions

- ▶ Create process for general supervisors to have access to specific expertise when more challenging cases arise
- ? Already have subject matter experts (i.e. education, nursing, substance abuse, etc.)
- ? Could match each general supervisor with up to 3 specialized supervisors (INV, CVS & FBSS)