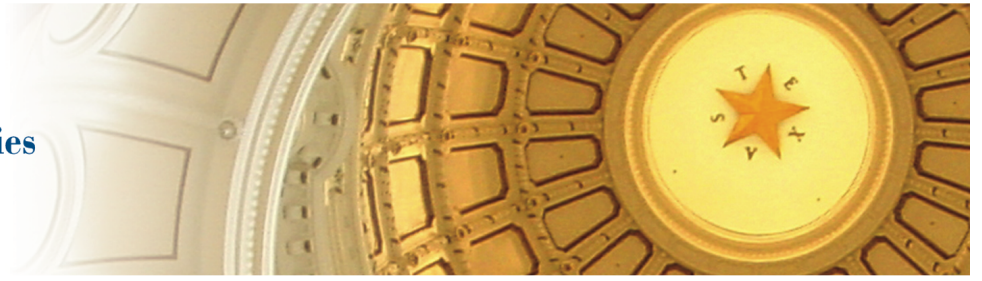




Center *for* Public Policy Priorities



Implementing the Permanency Care Assistance Program

Senate Health and Human Services Committee

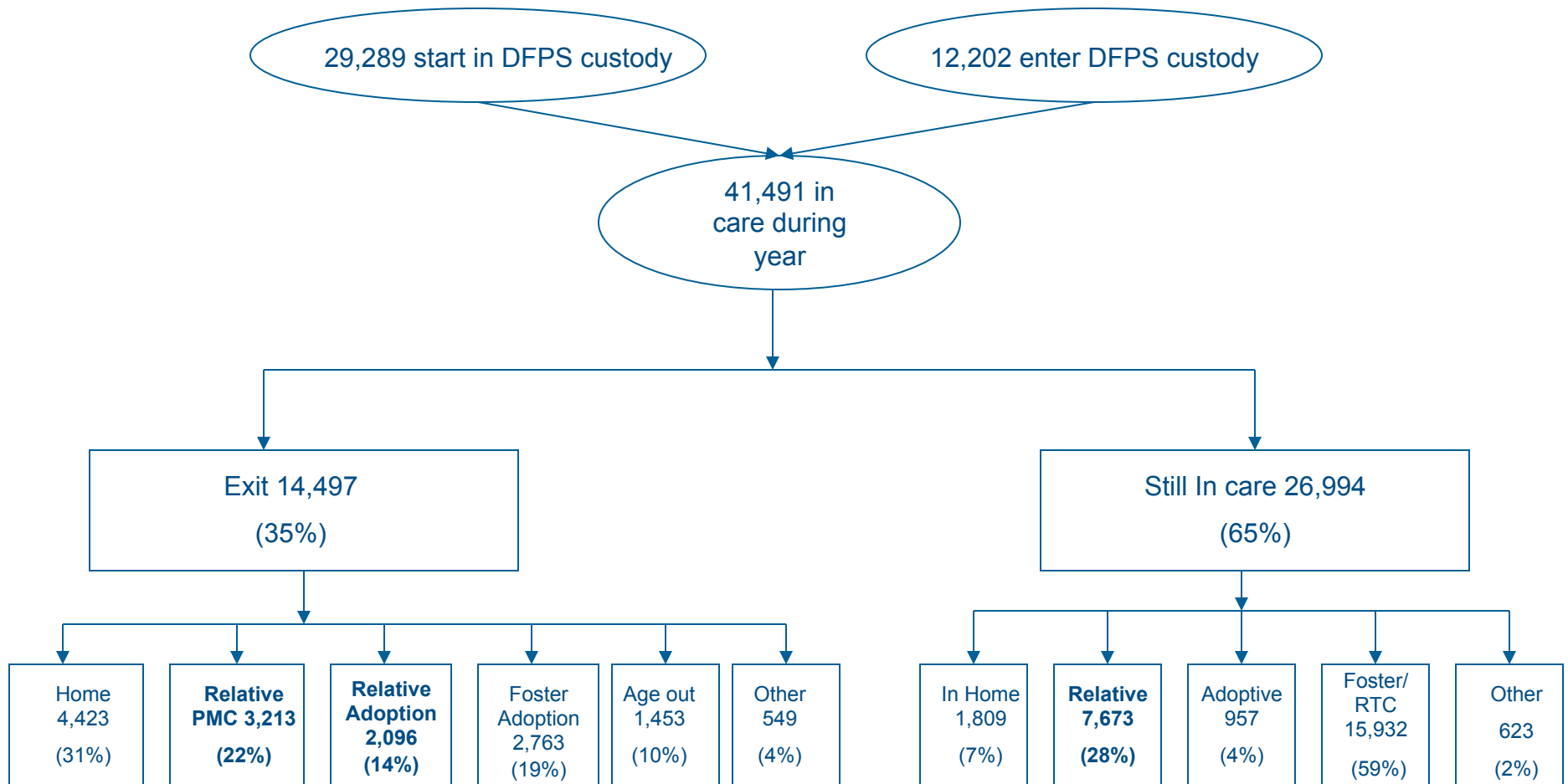
March 10, 2010

Jane Burstain, Ph.D., Senior Policy Analyst

Texas Has Two Programs for Financial Support for Relatives

- Relative Monetary Assistance Program – supports immediate relative placement with \$1,000 upfront payment and
- Fostering Connections Permanency Care Assistance Program (PCA) – supports ongoing relative placement with financial assistance when relative becomes a child’s permanent managing conservator (PMC)
 - Payment is similar to adoption subsidy: \$4,800 a year for basic, \$6,540 a year for moderate, specialized, or intense
 - Federal government subsidizes part of payment so it costs the state about \$1,920 a year for basic and \$2,616 a year for moderate, specialized, or intense
- Both programs are vital to relative placement and upfront money may actually be important to successful implementation of PCA

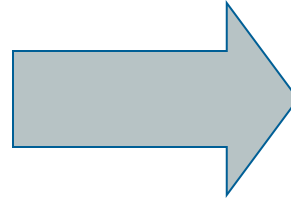
Children In Care, 2009



Included in DFPS custody are youth 18 or older who remain in DFPS care

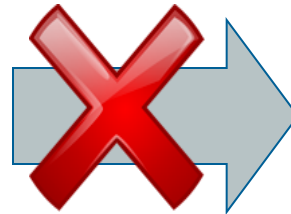
PCA Program: Intended and Unintended Outcomes

Age out 1,400 annually



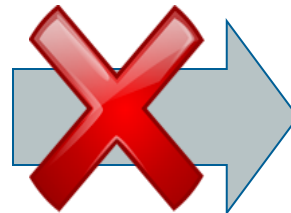
Relative PCA

3,200 annual relative PMCs providing care for free



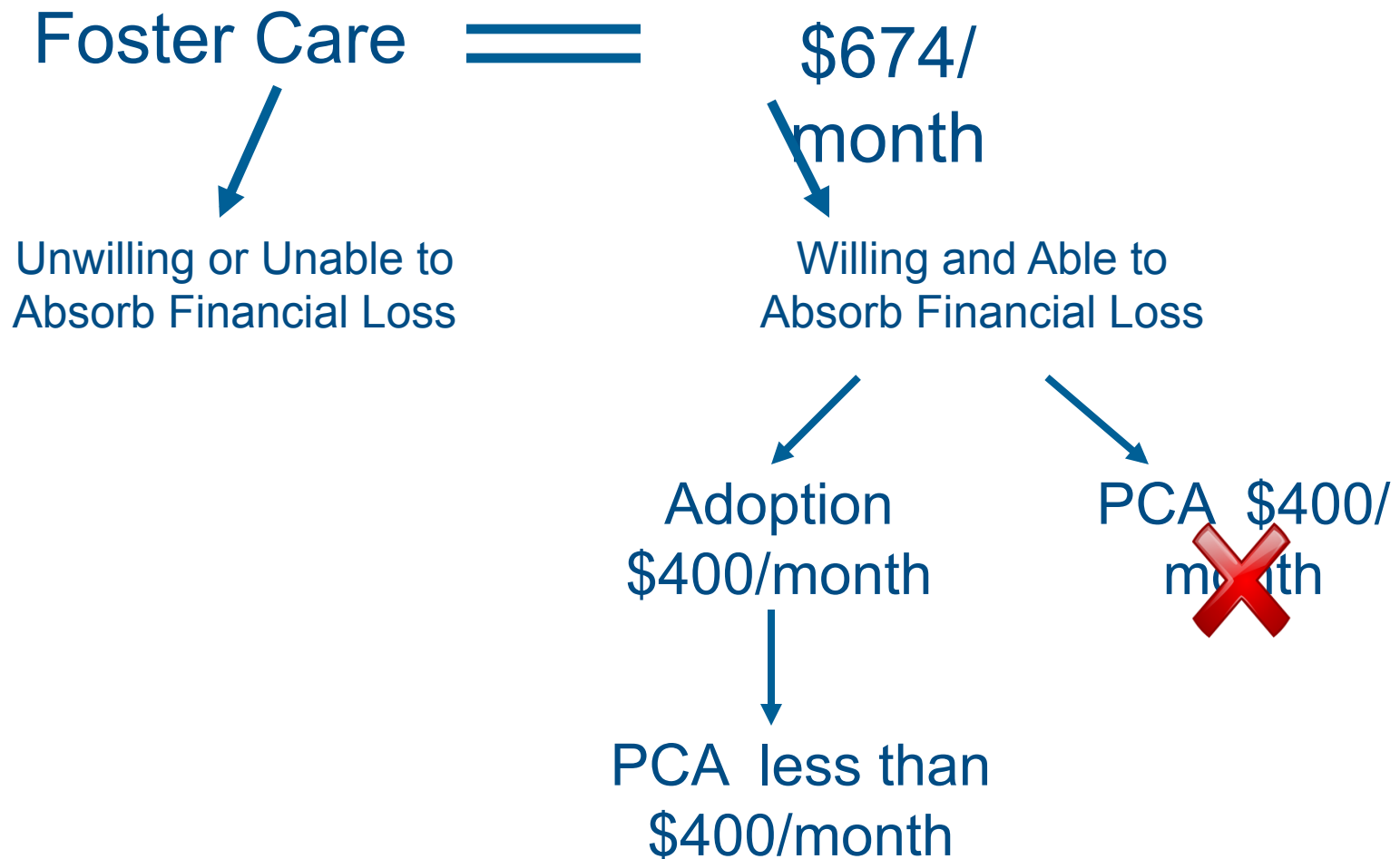
Relative PCA
\$4,800-\$6540/year

2,000 annual relative adoptions



Relative PCA

Giving Relatives an Incentive to Adopt



Giving Relatives An Incentive to Adopt

- Adoption “rule out” provision in PCA is difficult to enforce
 - As a practical matter, if child is attached to relative and relative wants PMC instead of adoption, adoption is effectively “ruled out”
 - TAC §700.1203-04; CPS policy manual § 6221.1 and 6221.2
- Regardless of program rules, in absence of a financial incentive, relatives often take PMC instead of adoption
 - In Illinois (which had an adoption “rule out” provision), 66% of relative PMCs could have been adoptions if there had been no paid PMC option
- If relatives shift from adoption to PMC, Texas may lose its federal adoption incentive payment
 - \$4.4 million in 2010 or 66% of purchased adoption services

Some Relatives May Be Unwilling or Unable to Leave Foster Care

- Going from foster care to PCA or adoption for 2 children at basic rate, lose \$6,576 per year and subsidized day care and respite care
- PMC programs in Maryland and North Carolina that set payments below foster care rate failed. Federal Administration of Children and Families found that PMC “is not an attractive option for many caregivers if it entails a substantial net loss in family income”
- Nothing DFPS can do about it. Under federal law, difficult to force relatives out of foster care because cannot treat them differently from non-relative foster parents (e.g., cannot cut relative benefits if stay in foster care long-term)

PCA Program May Not Reach Target Population

- Even with “non-safety” waivers, relatives with limited financial resources may not meet foster care standards
- May want to aggressively use \$1,000 upfront payment to relatives who need financial help to meet foster care standards.

PCA Program: The Future

- To address potential issues, Texas needs to seek changes to federal law and policy
 - Allow states to target PCA program to financially needy relatives and special needs children
 - Provide federal monetary incentives for permanency, not just adoption
 - Allow states to reduce benefits for relatives who stay in foster care long-term
- Without federal law changes, unclear how program will actually play out
- Provision for sunset in 2017 allows program to get up and running but provides important “out” in case program does not work as intended

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