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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES COMMISSIONER DAVID HANSELL PRESENTS LATEST AGENCY TECH UPGRADES FOR INCREASED WORKER AND FAMILY SAFETY

CPS workers will receive new Windows Tablets to access database when in the field; Samsung Smartphone App with ripcord feature will request NYPD assistance to workers at risk

New York, NY – Yesterday, the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Commissioner David Hansell demonstrated the agency’s latest technological upgrades that will enhance the work of thousands of frontline ACS Child Protective Specialists (CPS), and help keep them and the families they serve safer. Commissioner Hansell conducted the demonstration at the City Council Budget Hearing.

Each year, ACS' CPS frontline workers conduct over 55,000 investigations of reported child abuse and neglect. Conducting these investigations can put them in harm’s way, including for example, in the 30% of cases involving an allegation of domestic violence. Technological enhancements will empower frontline workers to work faster and smarter, accessing vital case information at crucial times, and ultimately reducing risk to themselves and the vulnerable communities they serve.

For the first time, CPS workers will have access to state-of-the-art Windows Tablet devices that will enhance their ability to conduct investigations and serve families in the field. Additionally, newly-distributed Samsung Smartphones will feature a simple but innovative ripcord device capable of activating an emergency application (“app”). This **CPS Safety Smartphone App**, when initiated, will alert a 24/7 monitoring service (“Alert Media”) that can contact 911 with the worker’s GPS location.



“Frontline child welfare workers have one of the toughest jobs in this city. I recognized that our 2,200 frontline workers needed Internet access on their ACS-provided smartphones, so that they can best serve children and families,” said ACS’ **Commissioner David Hansell**. “Building on our enhanced partnership with the NYPD, leveraging technology in frontline work is one critical way we are making sure workers are well-equipped to conduct their investigations and engage families. Protecting themselves and the families they encounter is vital. I remain committed to ensuring our staff across the agency have the resources they need to work effectively and best serve children and families across this city.”

"When it comes to protecting our city's children, we must equip our dedicated frontline staff with the tools and resources necessary to do their job at the highest possible level," said **Council Member Stephen Levin**. "I am heartened by the Administration's commitment to innovations both in usage of technology and structural reforms to better prepare, monitor, and evaluate preventive efforts going forward."

Through the Tablet program, ACS will provide frontline staff with user-friendly tablets to replace the use of the paper notebooks, and allow access to “Connections” (New York State’s child welfare case management database) and other important data sources when CPS workers are in the field. The initial deployment of 300 tablets over the summer for a three-month evaluation will cost an estimated cost of \$480,000 (FY2017). Upon completion of this evaluation, around 1,900 tablets are expected to be procured for CPS workers citywide. By the end of the year, more than 2,200 CPS workers will have access to these new Tablets.

Additionally, ACS is currently in the procurement process to integrate the **CPS Safety Smartphone App** into frontline work. Implementation is expected by the end of the 2017.

If they believe they may be in need of emergency assistance through the **CPS Safety Smartphone App**, a CPS worker may plug the wrist strap into their headphone jack to “activate” the Safety App. The worker would only need to pull the strap out of their agency smartphone, and the app would immediately alert the monitoring service operator to call 911. The device (and monitoring service *Alert Media*) has successfully been utilized with the Texas child welfare system.

To date, in an enhanced partnership with the NYPD, ACS has added over 100 former police detectives as Investigative Consultants, assisting with the agency’s most complex and serious cases. At all times, frontline CPS workers may request NYPD assistance, with the most serious incidents activating the joint ACS and NYPD *Instant Response Protocol*.

ACS recently re-launched an [enhanced version](#) of the CHILD-STAT program, including requiring the meetings to be held weekly.

About the New York City Administration for Children’s Services:

The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City’s children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. In child welfare, ACS contracts with private nonprofit organizations to support and stabilize families at risk of a crisis through preventive services, and provides foster

care services for children not able to safely remain at home. The recently released ACS' 2016 [Foster Care Blueprint](#) indicates a 25% increase of children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship and a 5% in adoption rates even as the overall number of children in foster care continued to decline, among other significant progress made to improve case practice and outcomes for children and families in the foster care system. In juvenile justice, ACS manages and funds services including detention and placement, intensive community-based alternatives for youth, and support services for families. In early care and education, ACS coordinates and funds programs and vouchers for close to 100,000 children eligible for subsidized care.

For more information, please visit www.nyc.gov/acs

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