



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COMMISSIONER DAVID A. HANSELL JOINED BY NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE EXPERTS AT FIRST ADVISORY BOARD MEETING OF ACS' NEW DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Advisory Board to inform groundbreaking new effort to disrupt inequities, break through barriers and help individual families and children overcome challenges

New York, NY – The New York City Administration for Children's Services (ACS) today held the first meeting of the agency's new **Division of Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Board**. The Advisory Board is comprised of national experts and citywide leaders, who have joined to help inform the agency's work, specifically within its new division.

In September, ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell announced the creation of the **Division of Child and Family Well-Being**, led by Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas. This division is a dedicated ACS office that will complement the agency's core child welfare and juvenile justice programs, by providing services and educational messages targeted to families that are not child welfare-involved, and with the goal of avoiding such involvement. ACS is on the forefront nationally in taking this approach.

To that goal, ACS has made a significant investment in new community-based support services, including the new model of [Community Partnership Programs](#), the upcoming [Family Enrichment Centers \(FECs\)](#), and trauma-informed curriculums at ACS' EarlyLearn centers—the largest initiative of its kind in the country—to develop the social and emotional resilience of our children (now in the second year of implementation).

“We are thrilled to have the support and expertise of field leaders in our efforts to invigorate this new ACS' division,” said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “The Division of Child and Family Well-Being will recognize the unique challenges that our families citywide face, and utilize individual and community strengths to increase resources and access for families, breaking down barriers to stability and independence.”

“We have a deep commitment to strengthen the lives of New York City's children and families,” said **ACS Deputy Commissioner Lorelei Vargas, Division of Child and Family Well-Being**. “The Division of Child and Family Well-Being is positioned to leverage existing

resources across the city to build on the strengths we know are inherent in our children, families and communities. We are grateful to all of those who contribute with their time and knowledge to create stronger families and a better future for them.”

The Division of Child and Family Well-Being, which will utilize a two-generational approach that creates a solid foundation for family success, is part of an ongoing effort to disrupt disparity and breakdown barriers to promote opportunities and establish accessible resources for at-risk families— from healthcare, housing, quality education, employment, to connecting them with support services.

The Division’s Advisory Board includes **Katie Albright**, Executive Director at Safe and Sound (formerly San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center); **Jennifer March**, Executive Director at the Citizens’ Committee for Children of New York, Inc.; and **Anne Mosle**, Vice President and Director at The Aspen Institute.

Other members of the Advisory Board include **Deborah McCoy** of Robin Hood Foundation and **Raquel Hatter** of the Kresge Foundation. Leaders within a number of City agencies, including the Human Resources Administration, the Department of Homeless Services, and the Department of Youth and Community Development, were in attendance at today’s meeting (*See full list of attendees below*).

Last week, as an illustration of its new public health education approach, ACS announced a [Medication Safety campaign](#) in partnership with the City’s Health Department (DOHMH) and the NYC Poison Control Center to better educate parents, caregivers and community service providers on how to prevent unintentional exposures to high-risk medications and toxic household products in their homes, specifically when children are present.

The public campaign, coordinated by the Division of Child and Family Well-Being, will include the distribution of lock boxes and bags to safely store medication, as well as a public education effort that instructs families and caregivers to assess the safety of their household, store unsafe items “up and away” and to contact the NYC Poison Control Center if medication or other unsafe materials may have been ingested.

The Division of Child and Family Well-Being will work to promote the new Medication Safety campaign, as well as the ongoing Safe Sleep campaign, citywide. The Medication Safety campaign will be in full rollout across New York City through the first half of 2018 with posters and other materials in English and Spanish. To date, ACS’ Safe Sleep team has trained over 9,500 child welfare and healthcare professionals and prenatal patients, fatherhood groups, community and faith-based organizations, expectant and parenting teens, formerly-incarcerated mothers, public housing residents, and homeless families in communities with the highest rates of sleep-related infant deaths.

The Division of Child and Family Well-Being’s Advisory Board recommendations will be developed and shared publicly after its next meeting in Fall 2018.

Advisory Board Members attending meeting on December 5th, 2017:

- **Katie Albright**, *Executive Director, Safe and Sound (formerly San Francisco Child Abuse Prevention Center)*
- **Lawrence Aber**, *Willner Family Professor of Psychology and Public Policy; Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development, New York University*
- **Lola Adeodokun M.P.H.**, *Program Director for Child Well-Being; Director for the African Health Initiative, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation*
- **Melissa Baker** - *Senior Director, Casey Family Programs*
- **Nadine Benjamin** - *Parent, Head Start Policy Council*
- **Maria Cancian**, *Professor of Public Affairs and Social Work; The Robert M. LaFollette School of Public Affairs, University of Wisconsin-Madison*
- **Yvette Sanchez Fuentes**, *Deputy Director of Public Policy, Child Care Aware of America (CCAoA)*
- **Jennifer March**, *Executive Director, Citizens' Committee for Children of New York, Inc.*
- **Anne Mosle**, *Vice President, Director of Ascend, The Aspen Institute*
- **Renee Wilson** - *Simmons, Director of National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University*

City Leaders attending meeting on December 5th, 2017:

- **David Hansell**, *ACS Commissioner*
- **Eric Brettschneider**, *ACS First Deputy Commissioner*
- **Lorelei A. Vargas**, *Deputy Commissioner, Division of Child and Family Well-Being*
- **Barbara Coccodrilli Carlson**, *Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer, Office of Deputy Mayor Dr. Herminia Palacio*
- **Kelvin Chan**, *Director of Early Childhood Development, NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene*
- **Susan Haskell**, *Deputy Commissioner, Department for Youth and Community Development*
- **Sarah Sisco**, *Senior Director, NYC Health + Hospitals*
- **Grace Bonilla**, *Administrator, NYC Human Resources Administration*
- **Joslyn Carter**, *Administrator, NYC Department of Homeless Services*

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. ACS is aggressively implementing a

[Foster Care Strategic Blueprint](#) to improve outcomes for children in foster care. The most recent status report indicates a 25% increase in children achieving permanency through kinship guardianship, and a 5% increase in children adopted from FY 2015 to FY 2016, 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 about NYC ACS, please visit www.nyc.gov/acs

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