



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

October 30, 2018

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ACS DEPLOYS NEW TECHNOLOGY TO HELP FRONTLINE STAFF PROTECT NYC CHILDREN FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As Part of Agency-Wide Reforms, More Than 2,000 Frontline Caseworkers Will Now Use Tablets in Child Abuse Investigations; New Software Flags High-Risk Cases & Provides Supervisors with Greater Transparency

New York, NY – Today, Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced that all frontline child-protective staff have been provided tablets with new software that will help strengthen investigations of possible child abuse and neglect. Microsoft Surface Pro tablets will provide frontline staff with greater access to critical documents and case history while out in the field, and new software will, among other things, automatically identify and flag high-risk cases that need additional review by managerial staff. The new tools are part of a much broader effort to use technology to strengthen ACS' work that Hansell has instituted over the last year and a half.

"Our frontline child protective workers are First Responders for New York City's children, and we have to make sure they have every tool available to do their lifesaving work," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "Whether it's making the difficult decision to remove a child from a dangerous home or referring a family to substance abuse treatment, these technological upgrades will mean CPS have the tools they need to serve children and families right at their fingertips."

ACS' Child Protective Specialists (CPS) investigate all allegations of child abuse and neglect called into the New York Statewide Central Register; last year, they investigated 60,000 such reports, visiting homes, schools, doctors' offices, shelters, and other locations to investigate allegations and interview witnesses. As part of this work, they must take case notes, track active cases, and access a family's prior child welfare history. Until now, they've had to keep paper records or get to an office to search databases or pull up records – losing critical time in sensitive investigations.

The new tablets, equipped with high-speed internet and advanced features, will allow workers to access the state's child-welfare database in the field, so that they can immediately see a family's past history with ACS and other relevant data. Each tablet also features Microsoft OneNote, which is similar to a "digital notebook" because it provides "speech-to-text" technology as well as the opportunity to handwrite notes using a stylus. This will allow workers to type their case notes while out in the field and complete reports more quickly.

ACS also launched a new [Safe Measures](#) Dashboard, which gives caseworkers, supervisors, and other staff a streamlined overview of case details. For instance, Safe Measures provides a calendar of tasks and deadlines in cases, tracks interviews that were conducted or are still

outstanding, and prioritizes workloads. Safe Measures also allows supervisors to view caseworkers' workload and progress.

"Carrying tablets with these apps and software helps us prioritize our work and complete investigations faster and more efficiently," said **Eric Blackwood, a Child Protective Specialist in Brooklyn** who was part of the initial pilot phase before tablets were given to all caseworkers. "We can get much more information about families while we're in the field, we can organize our interview schedules, and we can record critical notes in real time. This technology makes us better prepared for the increase in investigations we're seeing during back-to-school season."

"These tablets and software upgrades are a terrific example of how technology can be a powerful tool for public good, providing critical support to the men and women working to keep children safe throughout the five boroughs," said **Samir Saini, Commissioner of the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications (DoITT)**. "Enhanced technology for ACS will enable caseworkers on the frontline to better serve New York City's children. I commend ACS and DoITT teams for working together to deploy these important upgrades."

"It's critical for child protective specialists to be efficient and detailed while helping families and children, and New York City's ACS optimized operations by replacing the traditional paper process with a time-saving digital solution," said **Margaret Arakawa, General Manager, US Windows & Devices Marketing at Microsoft**. "We are thrilled that Surface is being used to empower specialists to be productive and flexible while maintaining impactful engagement in the field."

"This is great news! Investing in technology will bring huge benefits for the child protective staff as well as the families they serve. I commend Commissioner Hansell for making this necessary and timely improvement," said **State Senator Roxanne Senator Persaud**.

"Deploying new technology makes government work better," said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer**. "I applaud ACS Commissioner Hansell on his efforts to streamline operations at the agency – these tablets will benefit the Child Protective Specialists who are in the field every day as well as the thousands of children and families ACS serves."

A total of 2,628 ACS workers have been trained to use the SafeMeasures dashboard on Surface Pro. Previous technology enhancements include expanding the use of smartphones for frontline caseworkers, developing a new case-assignment system to manage workloads more effectively and providing CPS with Zipcar Local Motion Technology, which lets frontline workers immediately find and reserve Zipcars online so that they can more quickly respond to possible child abuse and neglect cases.

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