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**FOLLOWING WIDESPREAD REFORMS, INNOVATIONS & IMPROVEMENTS AT ACS,  
COMMISSIONER DAVID A. HANSELL ANNOUNCES HE WILL BE STEPPING DOWN AT  
THE END OF THE YEAR**

*Signature Achievements Include a Redesigned Prevention Services System, With a Focus on Addressing Equity; Enhanced Technology for Front Line Child Protective Workers; A Historic Low Number of Children in Foster Care, & More*

**NEW YORK, NY** - Commissioner David A. Hansell, of the NYC Administration for Children's Services, today announced that he will be stepping down at the end of the year. Appointed in 2017, Commissioner Hansell has been credited with enhancing and expanding the agency's continuum of prevention services, including by implementing new "primary prevention" efforts that aim to reach families with the goal of avoiding child welfare involvement. As a result of this work, ACS has safely reduced the number of children in foster care to a historic low of fewer than 7,200 children in care. These achievements and more have helped put New York City's child welfare system on the map as a national model.

"Commissioner Hansell has spent his career putting New York City's families first, and his exemplary work as Commissioner will leave this department better equipped to serve their needs than ever," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "On behalf of children and families across the five boroughs, I'm grateful for his service."

"David Hansell's leadership at ACS brought concrete supports and community-based services to families facing a variety of challenges. His vision resulted in record lows in the New York City foster care system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he equipped his staff with the tools and technology to effectively deliver uninterrupted services to ensure that children were safe and families were supported. The City of New York is grateful to David Hansell's dedication and service," said **Melanie Hartzog, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services**.

"There is no greater mission than that of keeping children safe and supporting families, and it is has been my honor and privilege to serve as Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children's Services for the past five years. While my passion for ACS and our mission remains intense, I have made the difficult decision to step down from my role as Commissioner of ACS, effective December 31, 2021. I am so proud of all that we have achieved at ACS, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is my hope that the next leader will build on this work and keep ACS in the forefront of innovation and progress," said **ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**.

During his tenure, Commissioner Hansell implemented a wide range of initiatives and reforms that have helped strengthen New York City's child welfare, juvenile justice and early education systems. All of this work has been grounded in the belief that the best way to keep children safe is to ensure their families have the resources and supports that they need to thrive.

You can read about his signature achievements and the progress at ACS [here](#).

Highlights of this work include:

- **Strengthened and increased services and support for families, while safely reducing the number of children in foster care to a historic low of fewer than 7,200.** Prevention services aim to help connect families with resources to meet their needs, enhance protective capacity and manage crises, maintain safety and stability within the home, and strengthen their ability to thrive within their community. Today, more than 20,000 families each year receive support like family therapy, mental health counseling, substance misuse treatment, and domestic violence interventions, as well as help accessing concrete supports, including food, diapers, cribs, benefits and housing support. In 2020, ACS launched a redesigned prevention services system for the first time in ten years, offering universal access to its full range of programs to all families across the City, regardless of where they live.
- **Expanded “primary prevention” efforts aimed at supporting children and families in their communities, and reducing child welfare involvement.** In 2017, Commissioner Hansell launched a new division within the agency that is dedicated to providing services, community support and educational messages to all New York City families, whether or not they are involved in the child welfare system, with the goal of avoiding such involvement. ACS is on the forefront nationally in implementing this “primary prevention” approach and continues to invest in community-based support services, like its Community Partnership Program, walk-in community centers known as Family Enrichment Centers, child safety campaigns and more. Over the next four years, New York City plans to expand from 3 to 30 Family Enrichment Centers in communities that were hit hardest by COVID-19.
- **For the dramatically reduced number of children who do need to enter foster care, ACS has made major improvements.** Research has shown that children in foster care who are placed with family members or friends (also known as kin) experiences less trauma, have greater overall well-being, are more likely to be reunified with their parents, and more. ACS has successfully implemented multiple strategies to increase the proportion of youth placed with kin from 31% in 2016 to 43% in 2021. Additionally, in 2019, ACS became the first jurisdiction in the nation to provide universal coaches to youth in foster care. The “Fair Futures Initiative” aims to enhance education, employment, housing and permanency outcomes for youth in care ages 11 to 21.
- **Strengthened child protection work by giving staff the tools they need to do their jobs most effectively and efficiently, using rigorous data analysis to enhance policies and practices, and improving staff morale.** For the first time, under Commissioner Hansell’s leadership, ACS provided all frontline child protection staff with tablets, equipped with high-speed internet and advanced features, allowing child protective specialists to type case notes, access the state’s child welfare database while out in the community, and more. These enhancements proved especially crucial during the pandemic. Additionally, to help frontline staff make initial home visits more quickly and respond to reports of child abuse and neglect more quickly, ACS implemented a multi-faceted transportation approach, including access to ZipCars that authorized staff can pick up and drop off at locations across the City. ACS also expanded the Emergency Children’s Services Unit, which responds to reports of abuse and neglect at night, and on weekends and holidays. In addition to doubling the size of the unit, ACS implemented the ECS Applications Unit, which includes a more

robust system to assign Statewide Central Register (SCR) reports in a timely fashion and request background information on each case before the frontline staff meet with families.

- **Launched initiatives focused on continuous quality improvement to better guide critical decision point and better serve families.** Almost immediately after his appointment in 2017, Commissioner Hansell restructured and relaunched the ChildStat Continuous Quality Improvement Program. Additionally, Commissioner Hansell implemented a Quality Assurance unit within the Division of Child Protection that aims to continuously improve the quality of investigations involving high-risk families, and enhanced safety review protocols, including by implementing a new “heightened oversight protocol” involving a fatality or alleged physical or sexual abuse of a child under the age of three.
- **Implemented historic “Raise the Age” legislation, ensuring that youth aged 16 and 17 who are involved in the justice system are treated as juveniles.** Today, under Raise the Age, older adolescents in New York City have better access to age-appropriate services and programs designed to promote rehabilitation, positive behavior change and successful re-entry into the community all while preserving the safety and security of youth and staff and protecting public safety.
- **Strengthened agency-wide commitment to addressing race equity and combatting racial disproportionality in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.** In 2017, ACS created an Office of Equity Strategies to provide focus and direction to the agency’s equity work. The Office has helped spearhead implementation of the agency’s “Equity Action Plan” and “LGBTQAI+ Action Plan,” which aims to strengthen services and supports for LGBTQAI+ youth in foster care. Additionally, as part of its equity work, ACS has infused more parent and youth voice into policies, procedure and service arrays. Under Commissioner Hansell, ACS created a new role of “Parent Engagement Specialist,” and expanded the involvement of parent advocates with lived experience of the child welfare system in supporting other parents.

All of this work continued uninterrupted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, albeit with public health protections in place. Even when New York City implemented widespread closures and public health restrictions to help contain the COVID-19 virus, ACS staff continued to carry out unabated the agency’s core mission of keeping children safe and families supported.

### **About David A. Hansell**

David A. Hansell was appointed Commissioner of the NYC Administration for Children’s Services in February 2017. Commissioner Hansell has committed his career to serving vulnerable communities and expanding opportunity. An accomplished manager, he has decades of experience in social services work across the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

Over the course of his career, he has served as a consultant to non-profit, government, and philanthropic organizations on a diverse array of health and social services policy and advocacy issues, most recently as Head of KPMG’s Human & Social Services Centre of Excellence. From 2009-2011, he served as Acting Assistant Secretary and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). At HHS, Commissioner Hansell helped oversee a division with an approximately \$50 billion annual budget, with responsibilities including child welfare, economic support, early childhood education, and special population programs. He has also served in prior governmental positions in New York City and New York State.

Commissioner Hansell is a graduate of Yale Law School and Haverford College.

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