

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, June 3, 2014

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*****PRESS RELEASE *****

Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities Holds First Public Meeting in San Antonio, Texas

San Antonio, Texas - The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities (CECANF) held its first public meeting this week at the University of Texas, San Antonio on June 2-3, 2014. CECANF was established by Public Law 112-275 (112th Congress), the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012, to develop a national strategy and recommendations for reducing fatalities across the country resulting from child abuse and neglect. The meeting in San Antonio was the first opportunity for Commission members to gather detailed information and insight related to federal policy, research, and practice associated with child abuse and neglect fatalities, with a practice focus on Texas.

More than 20 representatives from policy, legislative, advocacy, law enforcement, judicial, health and academic organizations spoke at the meeting, presenting on the current challenges and policies for identifying, preventing, and eliminating child abuse fatalities.

"I am delighted the Commission accepted my invitation to hold its first field hearing in San Antonio," noted Congressman Lloyd Doggett, one of the presenters, and the author of the legislation which launched the Commission. "Together we can learn from both our local successes and failures to help shape federal policy."

"The opportunity to engage with Texas stakeholders was invaluable as we begin our work to raise visibility and awareness about this issue," commented Dr. David Sanders, chairman for CECANF. "As the Commission undertakes its work, our goal is to seek solutions for eliminating child abuse and neglect fatalities by launching a national dialogue at the local, state and federal level that focuses on studying data and best practices in order to create an effective strategy for protecting children and youth."

The commission is composed of 12 members, six appointed by the president and six appointed by Democratic and Republican leaders of the House and Senate. Members will take a broad, multidisciplinary approach to studying and making recommendations about the following key issues:

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- The use and effectiveness of federally funded child protective and child welfare services
- Best practices for and barriers to preventing child abuse and neglect fatalities
- The effectiveness of federal, state, and local data collection systems, and how to improve them
- Risk factors for child maltreatment
- How to prioritize prevention services for families with the greatest needs

The legislation mandates that the commission submit a report to the president and Congress on these issues within two years (with the potential to extend the deadline by an additional year). The report will detail specific recommendations for strategies to better track and eliminate child abuse and neglect fatalities.

The next two public meetings will be held in Tampa, FL on July 10, 2014 and Detroit, MI on August 28, 2014. Members of the general public and the media are invited to attend the meetings, either in person or via teleconference. For more information on CECANF and upcoming meetings, visit our website at eliminatechildabusefatalities.sites.usa.gov.

About The Commission

The Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities is a federal agency established by legislation to study and make recommendations on eliminating child abuse and neglect fatalities. The Commission was formed as a result of the "Protect Our Kids Act" and is made up of six Presidential appointees and six Congressional appointees.

Media Notes: To request an interview with Commission Chairman Dr. David Sanders or request more information about the Commission, please contact Jennifer Devlin at 703-876-1714 or Jennifer.devlin@cox.net.