



SAFETY • PERMANENCY • WELL-BEING



**Child  
and Family  
Services Reviews**



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau





# Welcome to the Texas Child and Family Services Review Exit Conference



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# Child and Family Services Reviews



Today we will be discussing:

- Information about the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) and the CFSR process
- Findings from the previous round of reviews
- The case sample and preliminary findings from the current round of reviews
- Texas' strengths and areas of concern
- Comparing Texas' results to the national standards
- Next steps

# Child and Family Services Reviews



The CFSRs:

- Are a collaborative effort between Federal and State governments
- Promote continuous quality improvement in child welfare systems nationally
- Evaluate State performance relative to the State Child and Family Services Plan
- Identify both the strengths and areas needing improvement in State child welfare programs

# Child and Family Services Reviews



The CFSRs analyze strengths and areas needing improvement with respect to seven outcomes and seven systemic factors.

The *outcomes*, which concern safety, permanency, and well-being, include:

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

# Child and Family Services Reviews



Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Well-Being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Well-Being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

# Child and Family Services Reviews



- We completed the initial review of all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico between 2001-2004.
- All entered into Program Improvement Plans (PIPs) to correct some areas of their programs, and all had clearly identifiable strengths in their programs upon which to build improvement strategies.
- Although a few States are still completing their PIP implementation, the second round of reviews in those States that have completed their PIPs is now underway.

# CFSR Process



The CFSRs include:

- Statewide Assessment
- Case-level onsite reviews conducted by a team of Federal and State reviewers
- Interviews with key State and local stakeholders
- State data from AFCARS and NCANDS



# Child and Family Services Reviews



The *systemic factors* include:

Statewide Information System

Case Review System

Quality Assurance System

Staff and Provider Training

Service Array

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

# Initial CFSR and PIP



- The first CFSR in Texas was conducted in 2002.
- As a result, the State entered into a PIP to make improvements in six outcomes.

# Current Review: Case Sample



In the current CFSR, we reviewed 65 cases statewide, including:

- 25 in-home services cases
- 40 foster care cases

# Current Review: Locations



We reviewed cases and spoke to community stakeholders in three locations in the State, including:

- Harris County
- Dallas County
- El Paso County



# Preliminary Findings: Systemic Factors



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# Foundations for Program Improvement



The terms “strength” and “area needing improvement” at this preliminary stage do not necessarily equate to substantial conformity or nonconformity with an outcome or systemic factor. Strength in this presentation relates to contrasting within the context of other outcomes or systemic factors in Texas. Final determinations are made at a later time and published in the final report.

# Key Executive and Legislative Actions to Improve Outcomes



- SB6(2005) and SB758(2007) child welfare reform legislation resulted in the most comprehensive child welfare reform effort to date
- Appropriation of 3,500 new FTEs
- Additional appropriations for program improvement and other reform efforts

# Preliminary Findings – Systemic Factors



Four cross-cutting concerns frequently raised in Texas in connection with outcomes and systemic factors:

- ✓ Workforce issues (rapid expansion, worker turnover and caseload size)
- ✓ Implementation of updated Placement Standards
- ✓ Placement Resource Needs
- ✓ Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) as a barrier to permanency



## Statewide Information System

Items contributing to stronger performance:

- ✓ Extensive reporting capacity to readily identify child data and monitor planning
- ✓ Advanced technological tools including Tablet PCs
- ✓ Web based reporting on outcomes
- ✓ Interfaces supporting enhanced medical demographics (Medical Passports)



## Quality Assurance System

Items contributing to stronger performance:

- ✓ Dedicated QA unit reviewing consistent sample of cases quarterly
- ✓ All region coverage
- ✓ Program improvement specialists
- ✓ Automated reports monitor outcome items weekly
- ✓ Feedback loop to workers, supervisors and management

# Preliminary Findings – Systemic Factors



## Staff Training

Areas contributing to stronger performance include:

- Initial Training expanded from 6 to 13 weeks to better prepare staff
- Distance learning programs
- Specialization of training
- Alternating classroom and on-the-job training

## Staff Training

Items contributing to concern include:

- ✓ Lack of sufficient on-the-job mentors to meet demands with high turnover rates
- ✓ Training for numerous initiatives rather than a clear practice model (state level vision not consistent with implementation)
- ✓ Perceived by consumers as repetitive content rather than skill based
- ✓ Need for more cross training with medical community, law enforcement and CPAs

# Preliminary Findings – Systemic Factors -



## Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Items contributing to stronger performance:

- Criminal records processing is timely and efficient
- Strong recruitment efforts targeting racial and ethnic diversity
- A streamlined home study licensing process has been developed

Items contributing to concern include:

- ✓ Not able to recruit sufficient resources for children with higher needs and older children
- ✓ Retention challenges resulting in fewer net homes
- ✓ New standards implementation lacked sufficient engagement of critical stakeholders

# Preliminary Findings – Systemic Factors –



## Service Array

Items contributing to strengths:

- Rich array of services for children and families in urban areas
- Exceptional efforts to design specialized services

Items contributing to this concern include:

- ✓ State not providing or contracting for adequate placement resources to meet needs of children
- ✓ Lack of case worker knowledge of adequate services to meet needs (staff turnover)
- ✓ Waiting lists for MH and substance abuse services



# Case Review System

- Strengths/Innovative Practice:
  - Supreme Court Commission on Children and Families: broad stakeholder collaboration under the leadership of the Supreme Court
  - Model Courts, Drug Courts, and Mediation
  - Permanency and Periodic Reviews are held timely



## Case Review System

Items contributing to concern include:

- ✓ Children, youth, and foster parents not routinely participating in judicial reviews
- ✓ Permanency hearings not effectively preventing permanent managing conservatorship (PMC)
- ✓ Case Planning process lacks engagement and individualization
- ✓ Default TPR filings lead to less effective permanency decision points and may not move to permanency





## Agency Responsiveness to Community

Following contribute to **Texas'** strong performance on this systemic factor:

- ✓ General perception of increased agency openness and transparency
- ✓ Joint planning and initiatives with community partners
- ✓ DFPS meetings with Supreme Court and Court Improvement

## Concerns

- Ineffective responses to key placement provider stakeholders



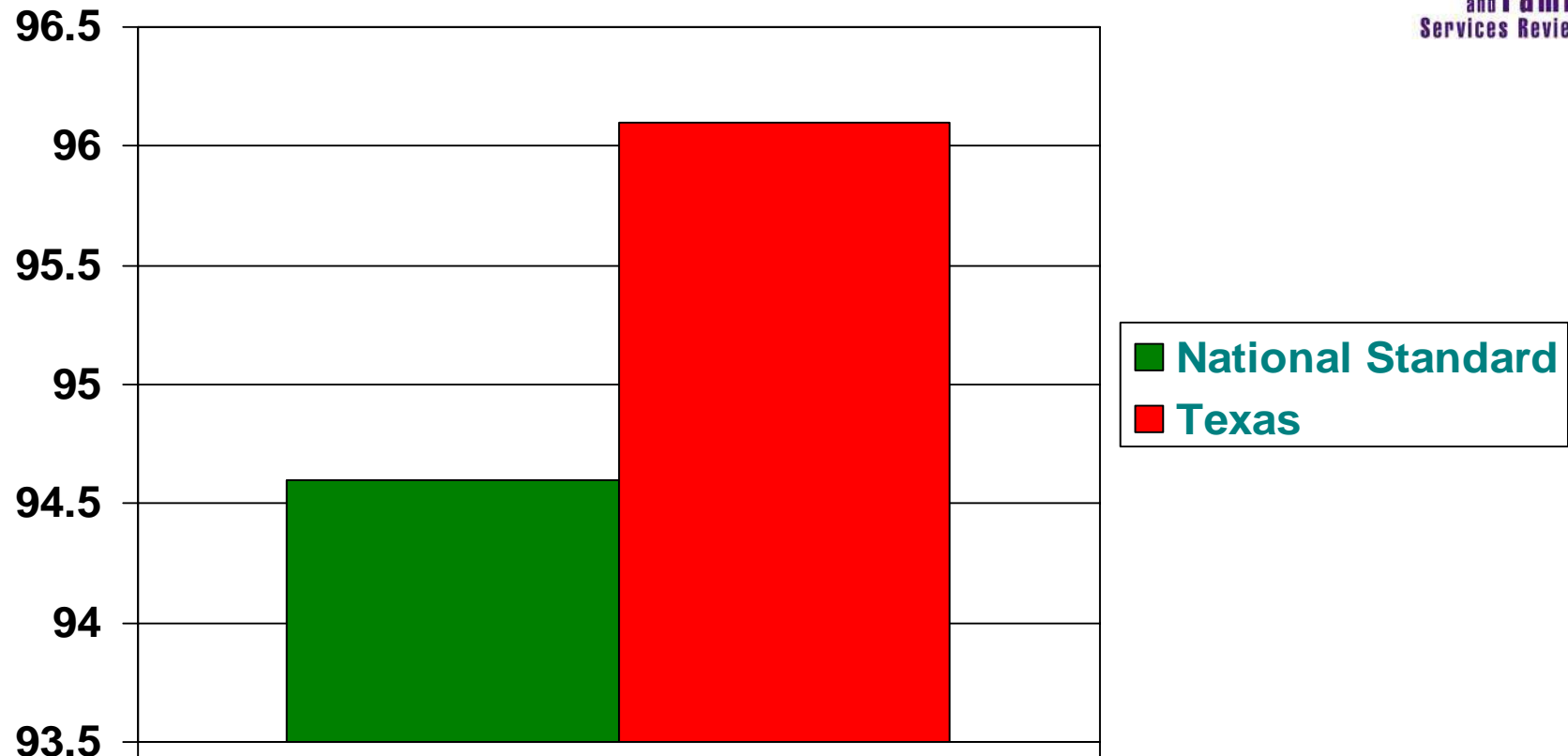
# Preliminary Findings: CFSR Data Indicators



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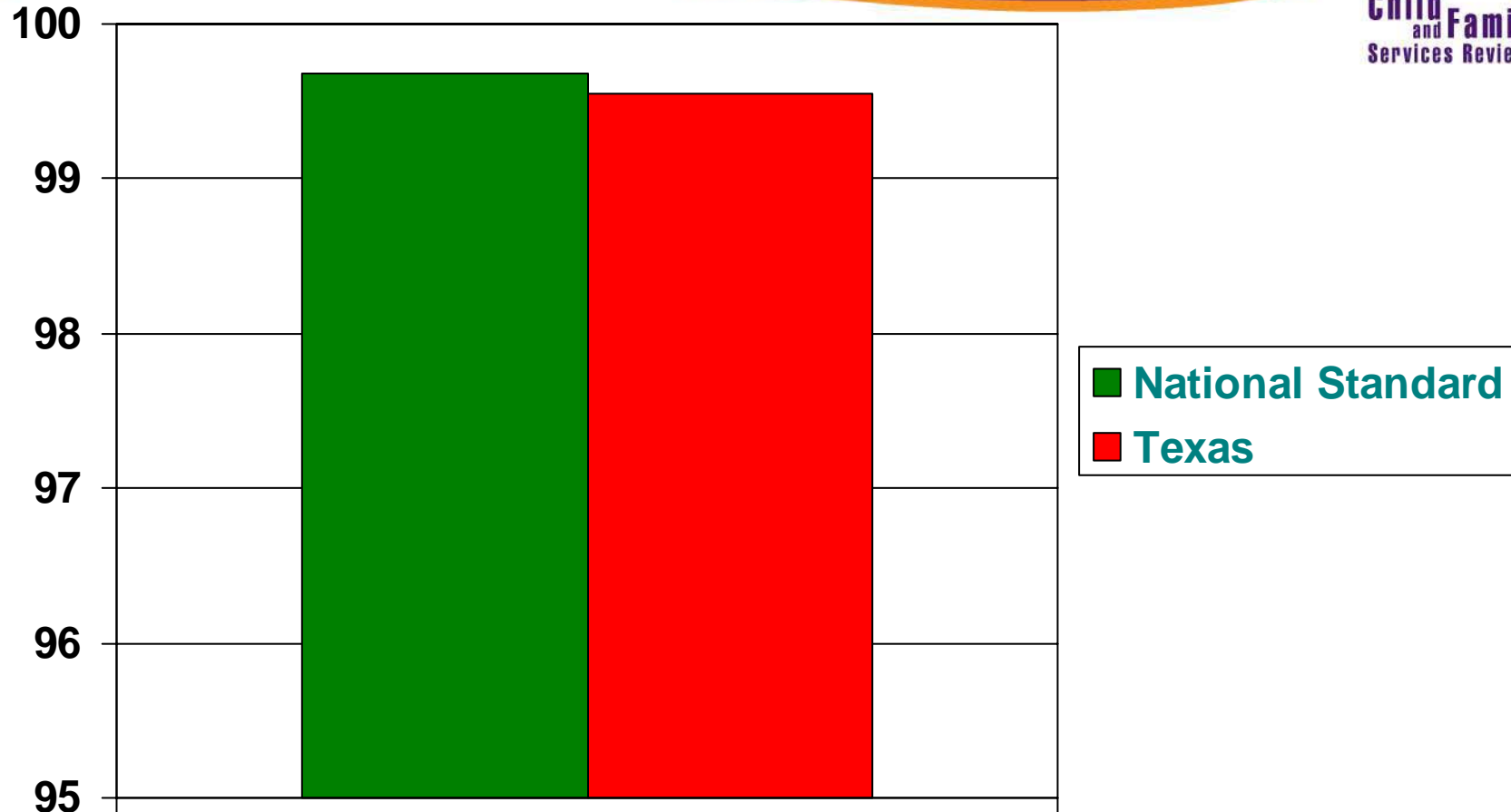
# Comparison to National Standards: Safety



## No Maltreatment Recurrence

Of all children who were victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percent were not victims of another substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation during a 6-month period? National standard = 94.6%. Texas = 96.1%

# Comparison to National Standards: Safety



## No Maltreatment in Foster Care

Of all children in foster care during the reporting period, what percent were not victims of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member? National standard = 99.68%. Texas = 99.55%

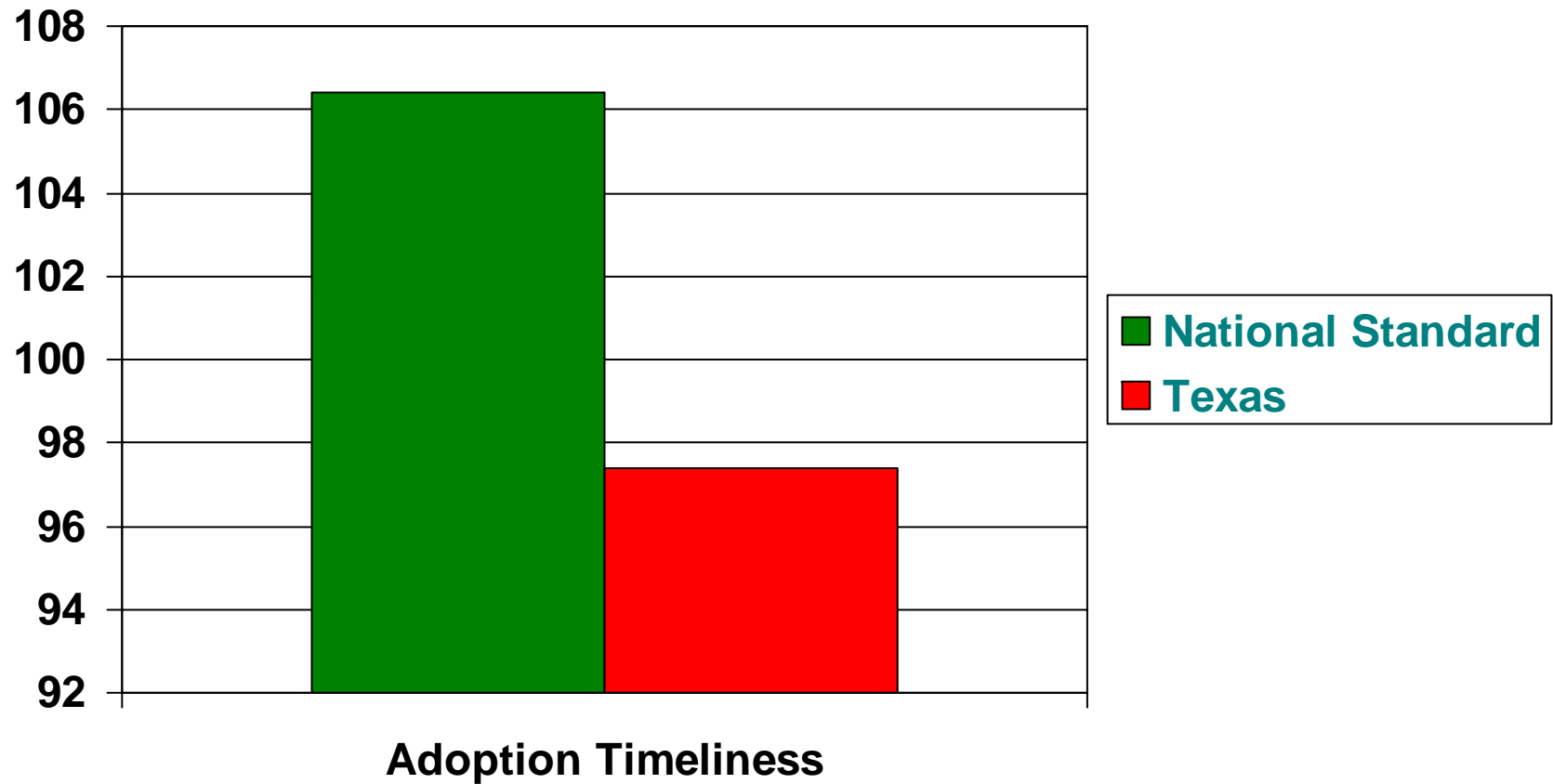
# Comparison to National Standards: Permanency



## Reunification Timeliness & Permanency

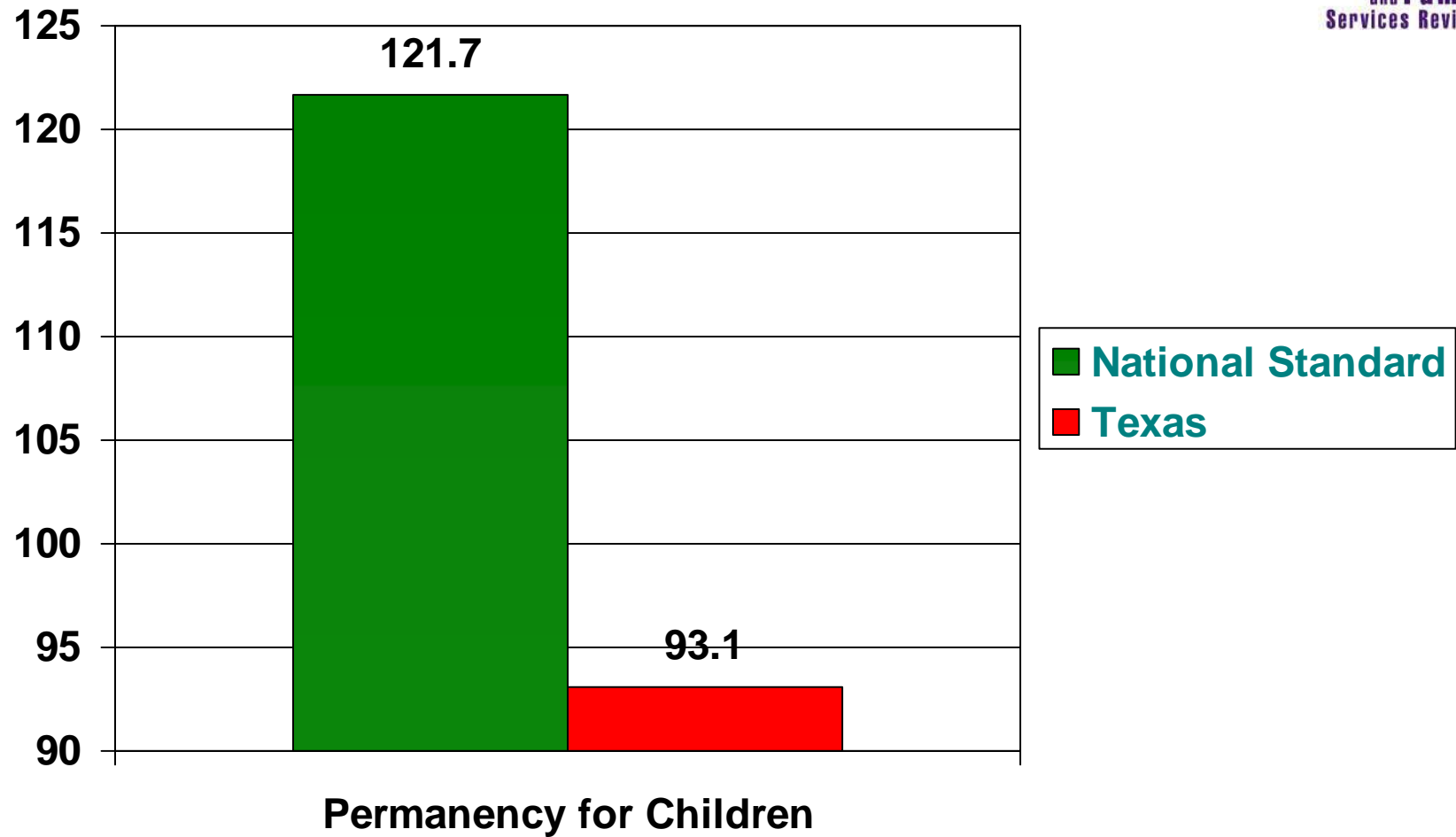
The national standard for the timeliness and permanency of reunification composite is 122.6.  
Texas = 120.1.

# Comparison to National Standards: Permanency

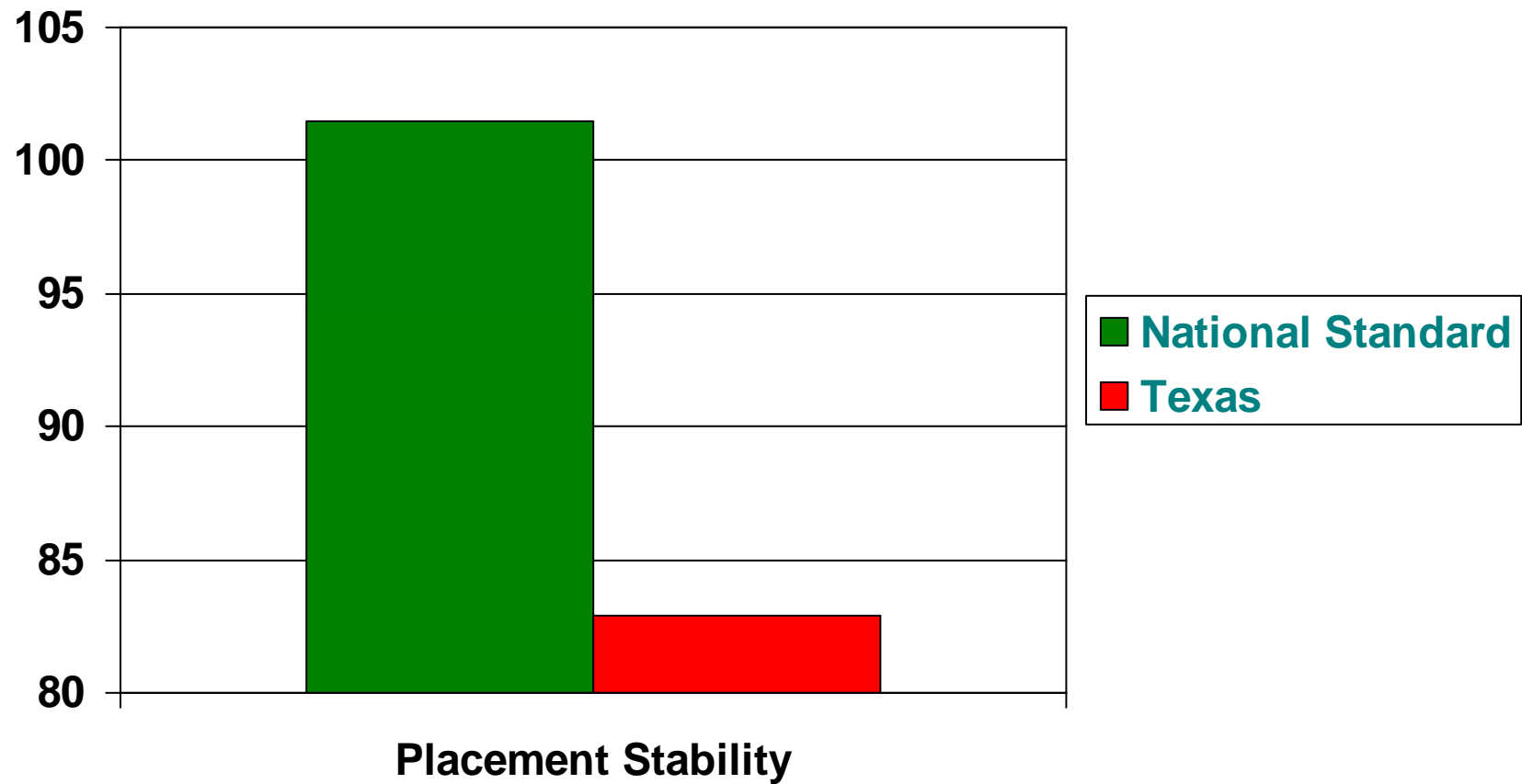


The national standard for the timeliness of adoptions composite is 106.4. Texas = 97.4.

# Comparison to National Standards: Permanency



# Comparison to National Standards: Permanency



The national standard for placement stability is 101.5. Texas = 82.9.





# Preliminary Findings: Outcomes



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# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Strengths



The (preliminary) top outcome strengths for **Texas** are:

(1) **Well Being Outcome 2** (most applicable were conservatorship cases)

Following contributed to **Texas'** stronger performance on this outcome:

- ✓ Educational passport
- ✓ Educational specialists
- ✓ Collaboration between school systems and agency

# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Strengths (*cont'd*)



## (2) Well Being Outcome 3

Following are contributing to **Texas** strong performance on this outcome:

- **Primary medical foster homes**
- **Nurse specialists enhanced medical care for children, especially with high level needs.**
- **Medical information available in the files**
- **Foster parents having access to medical information regarding children**
- **Psychological and Behavioral Health evaluations are being completed for foster care**

# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Strengths

## *(cont'd)*



### (3) Safety Outcome 2

The following contributed to **Texas'** stronger performance on this outcome:

- ✓ **Cases where services provided in home to prevent removal**
- ✓ **Drug court services in place**
- ✓ **Safety and risk assessed early and driving services plan**
- ✓ **Safety plans utilizing connections with extended families**
- ✓ **Work with relatives to prevent placement**
- ✓ **Formal safety plans are in place**

# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Concerns



The (preliminary) primary outcome areas of concern for **Texas** are:

## (1) Permanency Outcome 1

Items often contributing to this concern include:

- ✓ Permanent Managing Conservatorship often stops permanency movement - Adoptable children in PMC
- ✓ Concurrent plans on paper only and confusion on concepts
- ✓ Placements unstable - inability to match needs of child with skills of provider – placed out of community
- ✓ Families going to relative before concerted efforts to reunify

# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Concerns

*(cont'd)*



## Well Being Outcome 1

Items contributing to this concern include:

- ✓ Inadequate assessments impacted by staff turnover
- ✓ Children not always assessed in relative placement
- ✓ Lack of diligent efforts to engage fathers or absent parents
- ✓ Services not linked to assessments
- ✓ Inconsistent visitation between in-home and foster care cases
- ✓ Lack of collaboration between caseworkers and “I See You” workers
- ✓ Case worker visits with parents not a priority

# Preliminary Findings – Outcome Summary



## Safety Outcome 1

Items contributing to stronger performance:

- ✓ Investigations stronger for priority 1
- ✓ Flex units provide 24/7 availability
- ✓ Joint investigations with law enforcement

Items contributing to concern include:

- ✓ Some inconsistency in safe investigation or case closure

# Agency Foundations for Continued Improvement



## Key Foundations to Build on:

- Family Focused Approach to Practice
- Disproportionality Initiative; plan and community collaboration
- Family Group Decision Making
- Quality Assurance Framework
- Kinship Care Initiative





# Next Steps



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# Next Steps



The Final Report for Texas will be issued after the onsite review with final determinations of substantial conformity.

- The Children's Bureau Regional Office will provide a courtesy copy in advance to the State to review for accuracy.
- The State requests technical assistance from National Resource Centers (NRCs) as needed.

## Next Steps (*cont'd*)



- State begins/continues work on the PIP, including stakeholders in the process.
- State plans with Regional Office for training on PIP development through the NRC on Organizational Improvement.
- Final PIP is due to the Regional Office 90 days from receipt of Final Report. Due dates for drafts will be negotiated.

# Next Steps (*cont'd*)



Important: The State need not wait for the Final Report to begin developing the PIP!

# Next Steps (*cont'd*)



The Children's Bureau offers Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) through:

- TA for State Legislators through JBS International, Inc. and the National Conference of State Legislatures
- The Children's Bureau-funded NRCs
- The Child Welfare Information Gateway ([www.childwelfare.gov/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/)) for information and resources

# National Resource Centers



NRC for Organizational Improvement

NRC for Child Protective Services

NRC on Legal and Judicial Issues

NRC for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning

NRC for Community Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs

NRC for Child Welfare Data and Technology

NRC for Adoption

NRC for Youth Development

NRC for Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center

The Collaboration to AdoptUSKids

NRC on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare



**THANK YOU!**



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