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**Statewide News Release**

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**CHFS, Home of the Innocents Partner to Provide Transitional Health Care to Foster Youth**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Jan. 22, 2018) – Gov. Matt Bevin and leadership of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) and the Home of the Innocents in Louisville today celebrated a new partnership to provide improved transitional behavioral health services to children in foster care.

As part of a collaboration with CHFS, the Home opened the Children’s Assessment and Transitional Service (CATS) Center this month. The goal of the program is to provide mental and medical health interventions and assessments to help to prepare children to transition to the appropriate placement in the least restrictive setting. The CHFS Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) and the Home developed this center to improve outcomes for children entering the state’s custody.

Gov. Matt Bevin said the partnership gives children with unsteady pasts a brighter future.

“All Kentucky children deserve a chance to grow up healthy,” said Gov. Bevin. “Some children in foster care haven’t had the appropriate treatment — much less the appropriate evaluation — to get on a better path. Every child should have a chance to succeed, and being healthy is key to that success. This innovative partnership gives youth that opportunity.”

The CATS Center is a supportive, nurturing and child-friendly environment serving children 11 years of age and younger at the time of admission. The projected length of stay for children in the program is four to six weeks. The CATS center provides four core services, utilizing the Home’s integrated continuum of care. These include intensive medical and mental health assessment; integrated care coordination; individual, group and family therapy; group living in a structured and nurturing milieu; and educational services.

Additionally, there is on-site access to Open Arms Children’s Health, providing medical; dental; audiology; physical, occupational and speech therapies; psychological evaluation; psychiatric evaluation and medication management.

CHFS Secretary Vickie Yates Brown Glisson said this comprehensive approach will give foster children individualized care.

“Each child is different, and the CATS project will provide them specialized services designed to help them heal and be ready to move into a residential setting,” Glisson said. “Home of the Innocents is a wonderful partner in providing these children the proper foundation for a successful continuum of care.”

Home of the Innocents President and CEO Paul Robinson said he is excited about the upcoming addition. “A major transformation is underway in Kentucky’s out home care system,” he said. “Through our collaborative relationship with DCBS, we have developed an innovative strategy to better assess, make placement decisions and provide integrated services to children in out-of-home care. The Home is honored to be the provider of choice at the forefront of this transformation.”

Evidenced-based programming for the CATS Center is built on the guiding philosophy of Trauma Informed Care while focusing on child centric, collaborative, integrative, strengths-based and brief psychotherapeutic approach. The agency will utilize specialized services as clinically indicated by each child’s assessment.

It is essential to understand the system wide issues that are presently barriers to the success of placement stability in the Out-of-Home Care system. The CATS Center program was modeled as an unbundled environment, where behavioral health services are operated in the fee for service environment.

CHFS is the agency that administers the state’s adoption and foster care programs for more than 8,500 children in state custody, and of these, more than 6,000 are in a foster care placement.

CHFS and the Home are long-time partners. The Home provides a range of important residential, treatment and community-based programs and provides the region’s vulnerable children and youth with emotional, physical and intellectual support that can transform their lives.

The Home served more than 8,500 children and their families last year. Programs include offering a safe haven for at-risk children; pediatric medical care; shelter and education for pregnant and parenting teens; crisis and intervention services; clinical treatment services and therapeutic loving foster and adoption services. The Home also operates a pediatric convalescent center for children who are dependent on technology to sustain life, as well as children who are terminally ill.

Foster care is meant to be a temporary setting until families can be safely reunified. But when children cannot return home, CHFS staff works to find loving, permanent homes for them.

For more information about how you can become a foster or adoptive parent, or to get more general information simply email: [openhearts@ky.gov](mailto:openhearts@ky.gov), go to the state adoption website [adopt.ky.gov](http://adopt.ky.gov), which helps families more easily navigate the foster care and adoption process or call 1-800-232-KIDS (5437).

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*