



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Dallas County Judge Clay Lewis Jenkins
Clay.Jenkins@dallascounty.org
214-653-7949

Judge Jenkins Statement Regarding Issues with DCHHS Administration of Ryan White Funds

“In March, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), which falls under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, performed a site visit in Dallas County to review the administration of Ryan White funds. In the exit interview with Dallas County Health and Human Services (DCHHS) staff, HRSA laid out 32 findings of concern. A full report from HRSA is expected in the next 30-45 days.

I share HRSA’s concerns. The concerns are not new. The Department of State Health Services (DSHS) raised serious issues with DCHHS’ administration of STD program funds in 2014. Members of the Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC) have expressed concerns, as have medical providers. While the findings mirror similar findings in other jurisdictions throughout the United States, Dallas County and the people we serve will benefit from structural strengthening of DCHHS’ administration of the program. Both I and HRSA are confident those changes can be made and all will benefit from them. I’m pleased that DCHHS’ new Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer is taking these findings seriously and that his team is working to correct these ongoing issues. In the past, there have been concerns that DCHHS leadership exhibited resistance and hostility to concerns and those who make them regarding the administration of funds.

As we search for a new Director of DCHHS, we must ensure an open and transparent process run by and through the outside search firm process the entire Commissioners Court approved on January 16, 2018. This process must be untainted by individual pressure. As trusted medical professional associations, we should include groups like the Dallas County Medical Society in the process. That is the surest way to find a truly qualified candidate that will end the patronage system that stifles the work of our dedicated employees and is letting down our DCHHS patients. Our shared focus at Dallas County must be on public health, our patient population and advancing better outcomes for them.”

Additional Background Information:

Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer and his team are addressing 31 of the 32 concerns. The County Judge is responsible for appointing the Ryan White Planning Council (RWPC), which is a volunteer board with legislatively prescribed duties such as developing a comprehensive service plan, conducting an assessment of local community needs, and allocating funds according to service priorities set by the council. DCHHS is responsible for administration of the program funds allocated by the RWPC and for getting the council the information that's necessary to perform their statutorily defined duties.

Of the 32 findings, two areas of concern are related to the RWPC:

- **Communication: Failure to provide timely information to planning council and sub-recipient**

Director Shivaramaiyer and the County Judge agree the above concern is directed to DCHHS and not the volunteer RWPC.

- **Planning Council (PC) has 26 members only 16 members attended committees, composition not reflective of population, PC training necessary**

Judge Jenkins has and will continue to work with the RWPC to address the board composition in order to bring council composition into a more accurate reflection of our population. His office has previously relayed a need to vet and present more prospects from underrepresented racial groups to consider for appointment to the Council. Additionally, Judge Jenkins has directed DCHHS to work with HRSA and the RWPC to ensure the council members receive additional appropriate training. HRSA has informed the Judge they will provide training resources.

Judge Jenkins is required to establish a planning council and appoint members through the planning council's nomination process. He receives recommendations from the Ryan White Executive Committee, formerly known as the Nominations Committee.

Judge Jenkins' office has contacted the Executive Committee about this finding and reiterated his requirement that the board composition must reflect the population. Judge Jenkins will make the necessary changes to address the concern related to the RWPC and is working with DCHHS Interim Director Ganesh Shivaramaiyer to take immediate steps to get the Planning Council the additional training HRSA recommends. The other 31 preliminary oral findings are directed to and will be addressed primarily by DCHHS. Judge Jenkins and his staff are closely monitoring the situation and will assist with any request from HRSA or DCHHS.