



Texas Department of  
Family and Protective Services

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# House Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse

Charge 6: Impact of Substance Abuse

Hank Whitman

Commissioner, Department of Family and Protective Services

August 7, 2018

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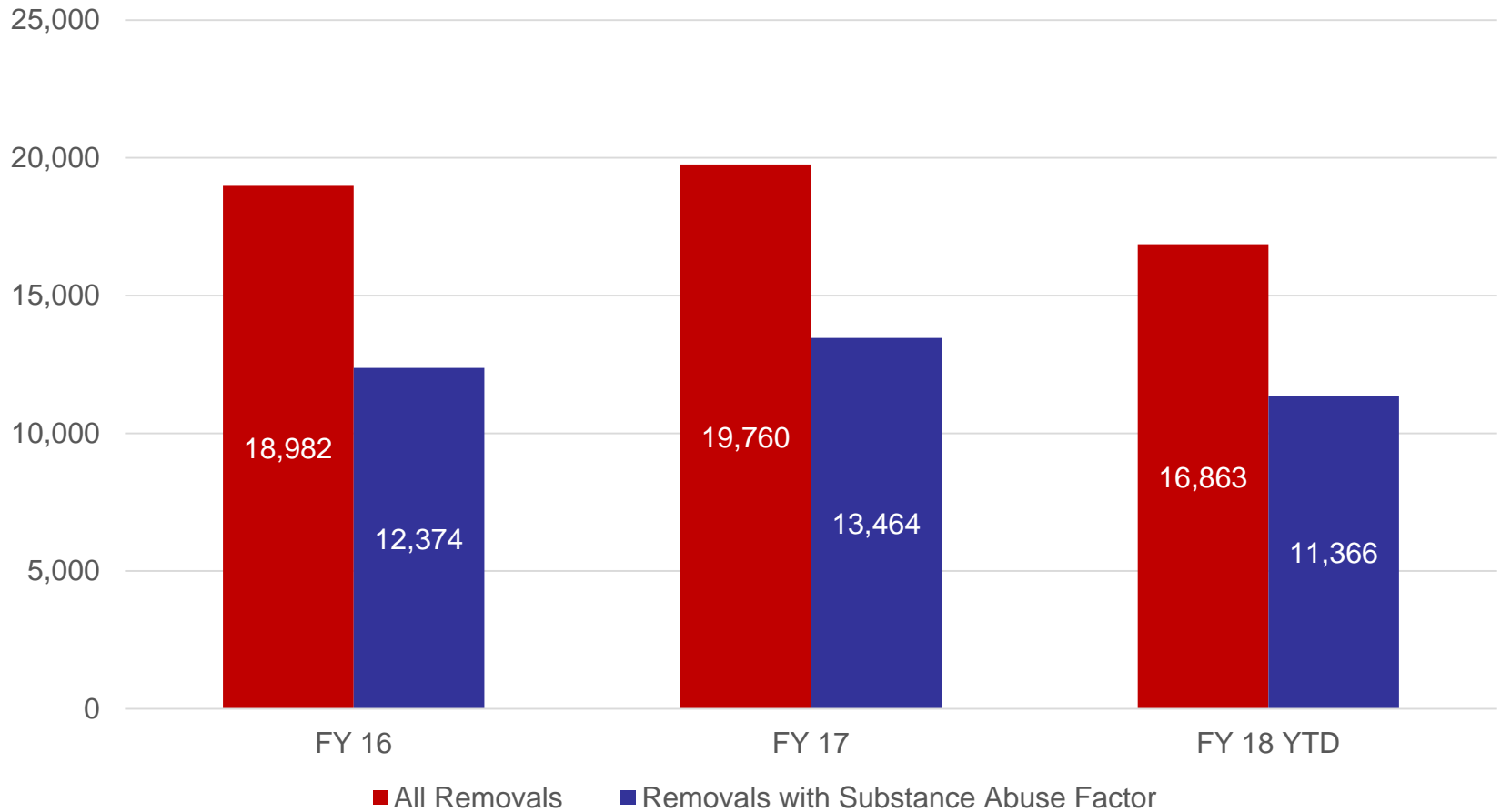
# Response to Substance Abuse

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- When DFPS receives an intake of abuse or neglect in a home, our greatest concerns are for immediate child safety. Investigators often find that abuse has occurred to the child due to exposure to substances or neglectful supervision of the child by an impaired caregiver.
- In many cases, the child may be removed from the home because they are considered to be at immediate risk of harm through drug exposure, lack of parenting, and a combination of environmental, mental, and physical conditions that lead to an unstable home environment.
- Exposing or providing a child with illegal substances is a criminal offense under the Texas Penal Code. While there is no law prohibiting a parent from exposing a fetus to illegal substances, DFPS still has grounds for action for an investigation.
- A joint investigation with law enforcement and DFPS is required by law on drug exposed children. Traditionally, law enforcement arrests parents and caregivers who have manufactured drugs in a home, especially where children are present.



# Substance Abuse as a Factor in Removals



# Substance Abuse as a Factor in Fatalities

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Risk factors such as substance abuse, mental health concerns, and domestic violence were common factors in confirmed child abuse and neglect fatalities:

- In FY 17, **52%** of fatalities caused by abuse or neglect involved a parent or caregiver actively using a substance and/or under the influence of one or more substances that affected their ability to care for the child.
- Almost **23%** of fatalities caused by abuse or neglect involved a parent or caregiver with reported or confirmed mental health concerns.
- Active domestic violence concerns were identified in **17%** of fatalities caused by abuse or neglect, but **40%** of these fatalities had a history of domestic violence.



# Child Abuse/Neglect Fatalities

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Child Population of Texas	6,865,824	6,952,177	6,996,352	7,121,499	7,266,760	7,311,923	7,407,636	7,500,272
Number of Intakes Assigned for Investigation or Alternative Response by CPS	231,532	222,541	206,200	194,803	215,512	232,159	238,591	238,600
Number of Investigated Child Fatalities	1,024	973	882	804	797	739	796	807
Number of Fatalities where Abuse/Neglect was Confirmed	227	231	212	156	151	171	222	172



# FY 2017 Child Abuse/Neglect Fatalities

Substance Abuse Concern	Active*	Past History	Substance Abuse Concern	Active*	Past History
Alcohol	23	20	Methadone	1	0
Marijuana	56	78	Opiates	2	4
Cocaine	16	19	Synthetic Marijuana	2	6
Methamphetamines	14	13	Other	16	3
Phencyclidine (PCP)	1	1	Unknown	26	31
Heroin	1	2	No Known Use	56	50

\*Active substance abuse concerns are indicated in cases where a parent has either tested positive for substances or self-reported abuse at the time of death of a child.

## Access to substance abuse treatment

- Availability/Location of services
- Waiting lists/Insurance coverage

## Parent-Specific Challenges

- Employment challenges
  - Child-care availability/frequency
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# Service & Treatment Availability

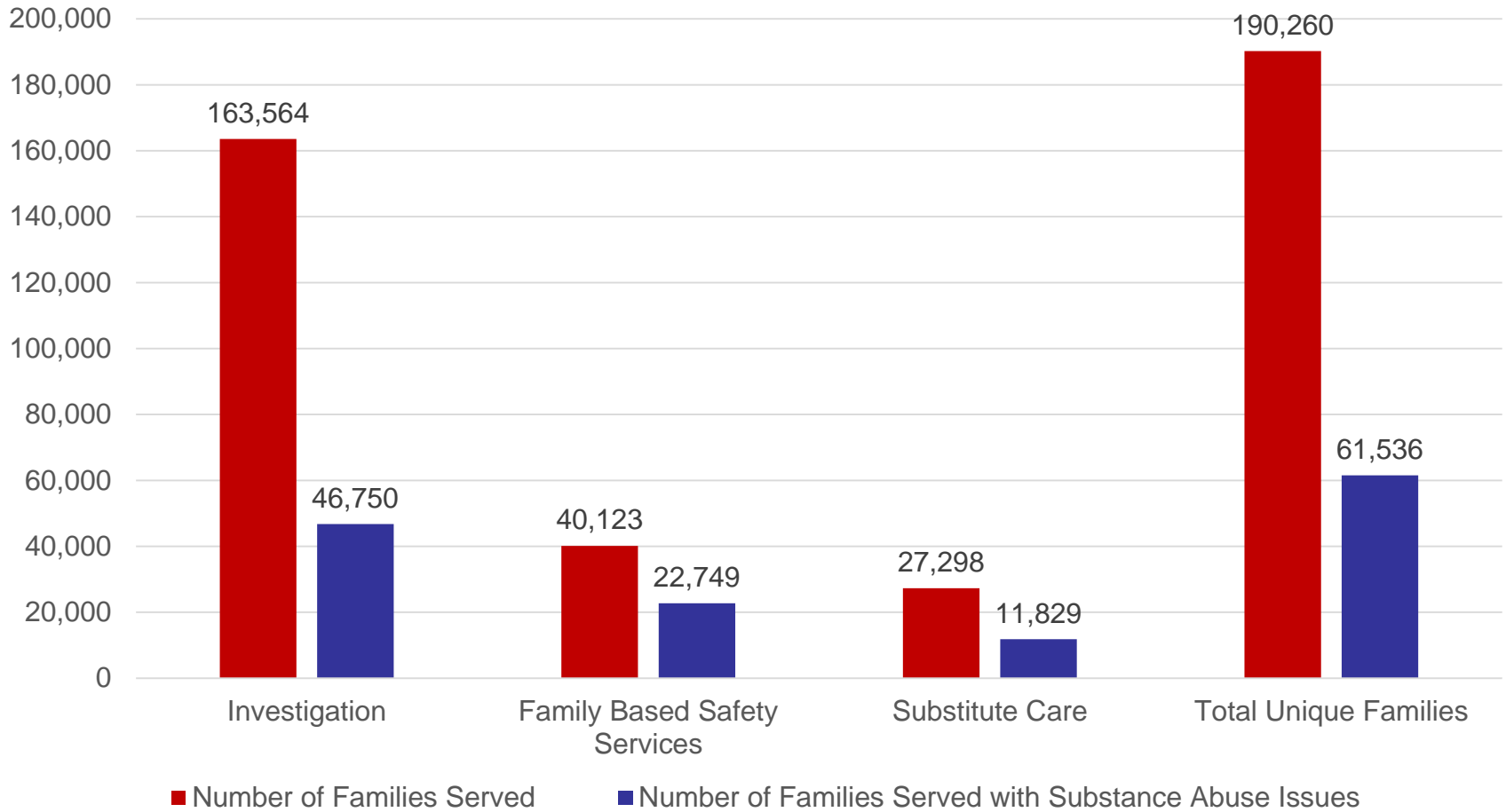
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- 14 Outreach, Screening, Assessment, and Referral Centers, or OSARS around the state are often the first point of contact for those seeking substance use disorder treatment services.
- In addition to inpatient and outpatient treatment, individuals can access education, counseling and other community-based activities to cope with substance abuse.





# Families Served with Substance Abuse Issues



- Enhanced TJJD cooperation
  - Focused planning to serve crossover populations, both parents and children
  - Enhanced transition planning to ensure proper placement of kids transitioning from one agency to another
- Bexar County Children's Court
  - Family Drug Treatment Court
  - Early Intervention Program

- County-led initiatives like Bexar County and other specialty courts to sustain families through innovative treatment and judicial solutions
  - Improved collaboration between agencies that serve similar populations
  - Education of Judiciary and stakeholders on the challenges of substance abuse and use
  - Enhanced services to support parent's sobriety when children are returned home
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