

Dear Providers,

Thank you for your efforts to get certified to administer the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool that will be rolled out for children coming into the care of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). In order to develop all pieces to this process and be able to test the process adequately, the go-live date has been adjusted to September 1, 2016. Please see the communication below from the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and DFPS:

"Senate Bill (SB) 125, 84th legislative session, requires that within 45 days of entering the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), every child shall receive a developmentally appropriate comprehensive assessment that includes a trauma screening and interviews with individuals knowledgeable about the child's needs. The Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment is a multi-purpose tool that facilitates linkages between the assessment process and the development of individualized service plans, and is the tool selected to fill this requirement. DFPS has contracted with Chapin Hall and Dr. John Lyons, the creator of this tool, to assist Texas in developing a child welfare version, an algorithm that will convert raw scores into recommended services, and to provide access to the eCANS portal. The eCANS portal is an online system that will be able to house CANS assessment results, deliver a suite of reports containing aggregate data, and provide system functionality that ties HHSC and DFPS efforts together.

The Family Strengths and Needs Assessment (FSNA) is a structured decision-making tool developed as part of the DFPS transformation effort. This tool was selected as the vehicle through which information about the biological family is communicated to the CANS assessor. To complete this comprehensive assessment process, caseworkers will be able to access the CANS, including information gathered from the FSNA, and it's recommended treatment services to develop a person-centered service plan that will come to be a part of the single service plan effort.

DFPS and HHSC are pleased to announce that this comprehensive statewide assessment plan will be the first of its kind. Additional work is needed at this time to ensure our systems are communicating information well to all involved parties, and that a comprehensive training plan is implemented to ensure a high quality and fully integrated implementation. As a result, a September 1, 2016 implementation date is planned."

Though this date is later than previously communicated, STAR Health would like to encourage providers who want to be CANS assessors to continue in your training and keep your CANS certification current. The new child welfare version is now available at www.canstraining.com. It is titled Texas CANS Comprehensive 2.0 (Child Welfare) and is the one to complete when you need to update your annual certification.

Thank you for your continued dedication to serve children in foster care!