



Update on divisions

- **Division of Aging, Adult, & Behavioral Health Services:**
 - During the height of the PHE and prior to the implementation of vaccines, worked with other divisions to make 15,000-20,000 calls weekly to Aging beneficiaries to ensure their safety and wellbeing and that services were continuing as requested
 - Transformed a paper-based system for Medicaid client service plans for 11,000 frail elderly and physically disabled clients into a fully electronic system
 - Implemented a partnership with a national certification association to expand Peer Support
 - Implemented first electronic health record system for the Arkansas State Hospital
 - Improved the forensic examination process by electronic case tracking and communication with courts. In 2022, will be creating new complex forensic placements to better serve persons under court order with ID/DD and behavioral health needs and piloting behavioral health peers in the courts
 - Implemented new IT platforms to support billing and data collection for the public mental health system and public substance use treatment and prevention programs
- **Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education**
 - Partnered with child care providers to manage through the pandemic and keep child care services available for Arkansas workers:
 - Created an essential worker voucher program benefitting more than 10,000 families
 - Provided COVID resources of \$106 million to child care and early childhood programs
 - Continued to maintain safety in child care facilities with regular on-site monitoring and virtual provider training
 - In 2022, focus will be on meeting new federal quality requirements and expanding child care capacity throughout the state
 - Continued implementation of electronic background checks for provider employees, reducing the time needed to clear employees to work in child care facilities
- **Division of Children & Family Services**
 - Launched Every Day Counts to prioritize safety and permanency in the work with children and families, and implementing Safety Organized Practice, a safety practice model that provides tools, strategies, and a framework for effective child welfare practice
 - Increased relative placements for children in foster care from 34.4% to a high of 40%
 - Implementing a new case management technology system, the Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS)
 - Modernized the Arkansas Child Maltreatment Central Registry by creating an electronic request system for the over 100,000 requests received annually
- **Division of County Operations:**
 - Implemented all healthcare programs (Medicaid and CHIP) into a new eligibility system
 - Implementing SNAP and TEA into the same integrated eligibility system, as well as implementing virtual interviews for SNAP clients
 - Expanded availability of live scan fingerprints into 53 offices, allowing quicker background checks for employees of child care facilities, foster parents, and prospective foster parents

- In partnership with Arkansas Department of Education, delivered the first round of Pandemic EBT benefits for the 2019-2020 school year to replace the cost of meals lost due to school closures for students receiving free or reduced lunches
- Launched the Arkansas Rent Relief Program in SFY 2021 to provide rent and utility assistance to low-income renters impacted by COVID-19
- **Division of Developmental Disability Services:**
 - Strengthened job requirements for direct care in human development centers by requiring all entry-level direct care employees to become CNAs, and provided training for current and new employees to obtain CNA certification
 - Implemented temporary policies to allow OT, PT, Speech, Autism, and Developmental Therapy to continue through telemedicine during the pandemic
 - Added additional slots to the Autism and Community and Employment Supports Waivers
 - Revised and realigned our HDC Behavioral Consultation Committee focused on greatly reducing the number of restraints
 - Launched the new Community Supports System Provider type to expand and enhance the availability and quality of services available for individuals with behavioral health needs and/or intellectual or developmental disabilities
 - Broke ground on new construction at the Booneville Human Development Center, the first new resident housing since the facility originally opened.
- **Division of Medical Services:**
 - Submitted the Arkansas Health and Opportunity for Me (ARHOME) demonstration waiver application for federal approval, which is expected this fall with a January 2022 start date. The proposal focuses health improvement efforts on rural health, maternal and child health, and the health of young adults most at risk of long-term poverty.
 - Finalizing reviews of all Medicaid rates, as directed by the Governor's Executive Order requiring DHS to establish a systematic approach to reviewing Medicaid provider rates on a regular cycle. There are 30 different types of providers for Medicaid. Rate reviews have now been completed for 14 types. 16 are in progress and expected to complete in SFY22, for implementation of any changes in SFY23. Beginning in SFY24, DHS will conduct reviews again over a four-year period, ensuring that rates remain appropriate for Medicaid services in Arkansas.
 - Creating a dedicated agency infrastructure to focus on regulatory compliance and program improvement for Arkansas Medicaid waivers
 - Maintained seamless operations of delivery of services and benefits for clients amidst the PHE, including renewal of multiple Medicaid waivers and advance planning documents
 - Negotiated new CMS directives and funding opportunities in response to the pandemic, such as coverage of COVID-19 testing and vaccines, coverage of telemedicine, and adapting program monitoring and compliance in light of evolving CMS and CDC guidance
 - Administered more than \$300 Million in CARES Act relief funding for Arkansas providers and workers, to preserve healthcare access throughout the public health emergency
 - Implemented Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), to address substance use disorder and combat the opioid epidemic
 - Continuing efforts in the launch of electronic visit verification statewide
 - Concluding the Episodes of Care program
- **Division of Provider Services and Quality Assurance:**
 - Enabled electronic submission of medical eligibility information for long-term care facilities. This system provides a faster turn-around time on approval decisions, reduces paperwork and personnel, and avoids errors or lost applications.

- Provided funding to long-term care facilities for equipment to allow communication and visitation for families during the pandemic while complying with federal requirements
 - Recognized by CMS for timely conducting 100% of Focused Infection Control Surveys for nursing homes identified by CMS as needing an onsite survey related to COVID-19
 - Expanding the availability of respite services for caregivers across the state through a new 5-year federal grant
- **Division of Youth Services:**
 - Opened a residential substance abuse treatment facility for male juveniles with a history of opioid or stimulant misuse. This program is funded by a federal grant in partnership with DAABH and Rite of Passage. The Residential Option for Adolescents in Recovery (ROAR) program is in Lewisville and offers 90 days of residential as well as six months of aftercare.
 - Expanded its Peer Support program to two staff who work with juveniles in DYS custody to address substance abuse issues.
 - Working with community-based providers to better coordinate and strengthen Re-Entry support for juveniles exiting custody, with a pilot project for Family Centered Treatment
 - During the last school year, 63 DYS students earned a GED and 20 earned a High School Diploma. As of August, DYS youth will have an opportunity to be in a florist program through Carpenter's Daughter as well as pre-apprenticeship carpentry training.
 - Offering college courses through a partnership with Crowley's Ridge College
- **Shared Services:**
 - The Office of Finance is implementing a software platform to consolidate the agency's fleet management and travel reimbursement into one system to allow for on-line vehicle reservations, monitoring of maintenance and usage, and travel reimbursements, with built-in business rules to identify waste, fraud, and abuse, and is expected to go live in early 2022.
 - The Office of Information Technology leveraged a combined and focused IT workforce to help train and transition central office and field employees with no prior experience working remotely, to remote operations with very little negative impact to clients and providers.
 - The Office of Communications and Community Engagement revamped the DHS website to make it easier to navigate and more client focused.
 - The Office of Security and Compliance collaborated with agency divisions and offices to:
 - Coordinate the Department's efforts and contingency plans in response to COVID-19
 - Develop and implement 71 corrective action plans to improve operations
 - Conduct program fraud training for eligibility caseworkers statewide

Significant Department Projects

- **Continuity of Operations During COVID-19:** DHS continues to work with providers, courts, and other stakeholders to meet the unprecedented program operations and staffing challenges due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. These challenges include continued program changes and staffing impacts, not only for DHS in its central and county offices and facilities – Arkansas State Hospital; Arkansas Health Center; Human Development Centers in Arkadelphia, Booneville, Conway, Jonesboro, and Warren; and DYS residential treatment facilities – but also for those who operate the programs DHS funds or regulates such as healthcare, childcare, child welfare, and social safety net programs. Transitions to remote work and service delivery, prolonged sick-leave and shortages, and new regulatory requirements have required flexibility and dedication by the DHS workforce and our partners. Throughout this period, DHS has maintained in-person operations in its offices with the goal of ensuring client services continue and that the health and safety of clients residing in our facilities is protected.

- **Staff Recruitment and Retention:** DHS has seen increasing difficulty with recruiting and retaining staff as the pandemic has continued. The department is pursuing multiple initiatives across its divisions to address employee concerns and provide greater incentives for applicants to join DHS and for current employees to remain. These initiatives include overtime pay, on-call pay, and other pay differentials for certain targeted classifications; salary grids for certain targeted classifications in the GS01-GS07 grades; and reallocation of functions among employees to increase efficiency and specialization.
-

Transformation Examples

- Although DHS absorbed CSTP with no additional funding, DHS was able to absorb improvements for the program of nearly \$200,000, including mold remediation of the student residential area; connecting CSTP with the National School Lunch Program; providing new laptop computers for students and staff; and adding educational resources through Virtual Arkansas, allowing students to transition back with no lapse in learning or school credits.
-

Staffing

<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2021</u>
7473	7281	7379	7320	7132	7135	6501

Legislative Initiatives

- **Act Implementation:** Of the 1,112 bills enacted into law during the 2021 legislative session, DHS must take action to implement a total of 100 Acts.
- **DHS Legislative Package:** During the 2021 session, DHS actively supported 14 bills that were enacted into law related to child welfare, Medicaid, and youth facilities, as well as technical changes, updates, and clarifications.