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I am here to today to testify on the efficacy of Prevention and Early Intervention Services in Texas. I have been working with children and families under the STAR Contract of Prevention and Early Intervention Services for the last 8 years. In this time I have served as a Counselor, Program Support Specialist, Director of Training and Program Development and now as Chief Program Officer. I have seen first hand the positive effects of Prevention and Early Intervention Services. As a Counselor I was able to walk families through their most difficult struggles, from grief, to trauma, to suicidality. As just one of PEI's 28 contractors, last year, we provided 31,000 hour of free counseling to 5,000 children and their families. 71% of the clients that are served at my agency, report that without free services, they would have had no where else to turn for counseling. The families that are served through PEI are motivated to see change, to see healing and to connect with others. 75% of STAR clients see an increase in at least 1 Protective Factor and 96% reported in an anonymous survey of over 200 clients that their counselor helped their family to learn healthy ways to communicate. In addition, 98% of our families felt that our services positively impacted their life. Prevention services keep families free from abuse and free from juvenile service involvement. 99% of our clients are free from both of these systems.

For 4 years, STARRY and many other Prevention and Early Intervention Programs in Texas have set out on a journey to learn more about the effects of trauma and provide high quality, trauma informed care. We not only know the effects of trauma, but we know how to respond to and treat trauma. In PEI, we have seen a large increase in cases with more significant needs, and we are called to be a resource for those families. Presently, Prevention and Early Intervention Services only provides services to families who have custody of their children, which rules out biological families who have children in foster care. However, in recent years we have been allowed to see families with an open CPS case, but the majority of our clients have no CPS involvement. Through our evidence-based and promising practices, along with National Strengthening Families Network Standards for Quality, PEI is growing stronger and more capable every day. Funding for Prevention Services should continue and we welcome working with families who may be greater at risk. Currently, PEI focuses on youth and helping meet their needs. In the future I would welcome the opportunity to work more with adults as we know that children cannot prevent their own child abuse. For now, the skills we are providing to families are indispensable and life-changing. I can only imagine what we could accomplish with a more cohesive continuum of care, working with CPS and Family-Based Services. Our Programs work and if we are able to expand our scope, and further our work with parents who have experienced trauma, we are primed and ready to take on the challenge.

I believe that the true keys to prevention and early intervention lie heavily with drug and alcohol abuse programs, as well as mental health and psychiatric care. The vast majority of the parents in our Foster Care Program have had their children removed due to these issues. I know through experience with my own family members and through my work in a family serving agency that mental health and substance

abuse services need to expand to meet the needs of parents suffering from the effects of addiction and trauma. My recommendations would be to continue to increase availability to parents to seek services through the effective programs in PEI and, in addition, to invest in high quality treatment for adults suffering from trauma. In order to break the cycle of abuse, we cannot ignore the parents right in front of us who are struggling and need more help than what is currently provided to them.