



City of Philadelphia

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Michael A. Nutter, Mayor
Mark McDonald, Press Secretary

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR NUTTER SIGNS SVU-DHS CO-LOCATION BILL

Philadelphia, April 10, 2012 – Mayor Michael A. Nutter signed Bill No. 120084, the SVU-DHS Co-Location Bill, which clears the way to combine members of the Philadelphia Police Department Special Victims Unit (SVU), the Department of Human Services Sexual Abuse Investigations Unit, the Philadelphia Children's Alliance and staff from the District Attorney's Office in a new facility located at 300 E. Hunting Park Avenue. Deputy Police Commissioner Richard Ross, District Attorney Seth Williams, DHS Commissioner Anne Marie Ambrose and Philadelphia Children's Alliance Executive Director Chris Kirchner were present for the bill signing.

"Bringing together these different agencies, who share the same goal of supporting and protecting victims of sexual abuse, has taken nearly a decade," said Mayor Nutter. "This move is critical to coordinating efforts to improve efficiency in investigations and fact-finding and providing services while reducing the adverse impact of coming forward on victims."

Police Commissioner Ramsey said, "Our goal is always to serve and protect. By co-locating the SVU, DHS Sexual Abuse Investigation Unit and the Philadelphia Children's Alliance, the City is making a commitment to the children of Philadelphia - saying it will do everything it can to ease the process of coming forward as a victim of sexual abuse."

DHS Commissioner Ambrose said, "I am thrilled that this day has finally come! Co-location has been a goal of the Agency for a decade. The affects of child sexual abuse can be extremely damaging to its young victims. As child welfare professionals, one of our greatest concerns is that our efforts to investigate abuse do not further traumatize its victims. Co-locating will help lessen the trauma of the investigative process by offering a comfortable, child-friendly place for children to receive services and by allowing partner agencies to effectively coordinate their efforts in a single location. As a result, children will no longer have to repeatedly relive the events of their assault."

Currently, the building is a 30,000 sq. ft. Ironstone Partners, LLC will renovate the building, adding an additional 10,000 sq. ft. The space will feature a new, landscaped courtyard and a parking lot for approximately 140 vehicles. Once completed, the PPD SVU will have two entrances and DHS and PCA will share an entrance. The



anticipated completion of the renovation is late 2012 to early 2013.

"The dream of co-location was exactly that - a dream- for myself, my staff and our board, on behalf of the children we serve. Our dream is being realized today thanks to the hard work and collaboration of Mayor Nutter, the city and our partner agencies," Chris Kirchner said. "In this facility, we will be able to foster deeper collaboration among the Philadelphia Children's Alliance, Dept. of Human Services, the Special Victims Unit, the District Attorney's Office, and medical professionals. This will lead to more efficient and effective service to child victims of sexual abuse, which, in the end, is the ultimate goal."

District Attorney Williams said, "This will have a tremendous impact on all the mothers and children in Philadelphia who up until now had to navigate their way to the DA's office, DHS, Special Victims, and PCA by juggling public transit schedules. It's tragic that families already dealing with chaos and uncertainty were in a sense revictimized again by having to go to different buildings and agencies to try and get justice. The co-location of these agencies will help us better service victims and witnesses in the city."