

Melbourne, VIC, Australia, 6th April 2017 – The Children’s Protection Society (CPS) in partnership with UnitingCare ReGen, Anglicare Victoria, IPC Health, University of Toronto, and Changing Ways (Canada), welcomed the Victorian Government’s announcement of new funding to provide targeted family violence programs for vulnerable families. The funding of the ‘Caring Dads’ program, announced by Minister for Families and Children Jenny Mikakos, will enable the pilot adaptation of an established Canadian early intervention (Caring Dads) for fathers whose behaviour exposes their children to harm because of neglect, physical and emotional abuse or domestic violence.

CPS charged with leading a research trial of Caring Dads across three Victorian sites: North East Melbourne, Western Melbourne and Inner Gippsland. The trial, funded by Gandel Philanthropy and the Department of Health and Human Services, will be rigorously evaluated by a team from the University of Melbourne. The three Areas were selected as trial sites due to the prevalence of family violence. CPS and UnitingCare ReGen will deliver Caring Dads in the North-East Melbourne Area, and provide clinical oversight and support to Caring Dads sites in Inner Gippsland and Western Melbourne, where local organisations Anglicare in Inner Gippsland and Anglicare in partnership with IPC Health in Western Melbourne will provide the service.

The trial of Caring Dads is significant, and represents a major investment by the Victorian government alongside a partnership between philanthropic organisations and state government led by a Community Service Organisation. Caring Dads is an evidence-based program with a family violence prevention focus and as such there are clear links to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Due to the specific and rigorous nature of the evaluation, the research partners (e.g. CPS, UnitingCare, ReGen, Anglicare Victoria, IPC Health and the University of Melbourne) are not able to provide support and training to additional sites across Victoria until the research is completed in 2020. After the research trial, the research partners are committed to sharing results with the community and to facilitating further development of Caring Dads, should it be supported in pilot research. None of the agencies involved in this trial have an exclusive license to Caring Dads for Melbourne, Victoria, or Australia. Licensing is maintained by the Caring Dads organization in Canada. If Caring Dads is found to be a successful model in Melbourne, additional training and opportunities will be provided for additional sites and further discussions will be held around the development of this exciting program.

If you have any more specific questions regarding these matters, please contact Caring Dads Clinical Director, Jane Williams on jwilliams@cps.org.au.