The background of the slide features a close-up, slightly blurred image of a glass filled with orange juice. A white straw is visible, extending from the top right towards the center of the glass. The lighting is bright, creating a warm, golden glow on the surface of the liquid and the rim of the glass.

Surveying Unfunded Mandates

Texas Association of Counties biennial survey: creation, results, and schedule

Prepared for:
46th Annual County Treasurers' Continuing Education Seminar

Session Overview

- The history of the 2016 survey and the reason for its creation
- The specific questions that were asked
- Why was it important? And, how was it used?
- The next survey

History of the 2016 Survey

- Leading up to the 85th Legislative Session
 - Pressure on local governments about taxes
 - A Legislator's common phrase
- Initial planning group
 - TAC, CUC, County Judges & Commissioners, Auditors
 - Created a list of unfunded mandates
 - Studied the feasibility of the questions; then
 - Test, test, test

The Questions

- 31 questions made the survey
- We didn't ask if we could get the data elsewhere
 - We know your time is important
- Average time to complete
- Comments received were heard
- Response statistics

Certain questions were difficult

- CPS Appointed Attorney Expenses
- Emergency Room expenses at your jail
- E-filing hardware & software costs

Court-Appointed Attorneys in Child Protective Services Cases

Counties must pay for all the costs of attorneys appointed to represent children and indigent parents in certain Child Protective Services (CPS) cases. Sixty-seven counties provided their expenditures for court-appointed attorneys (ad litem) in CPS cases; we asked that they exclude expenditures in criminal cases. Expenditures spiked somewhat in FY 2014 with an 8.8 percent increase before slowing to less than 3 percent

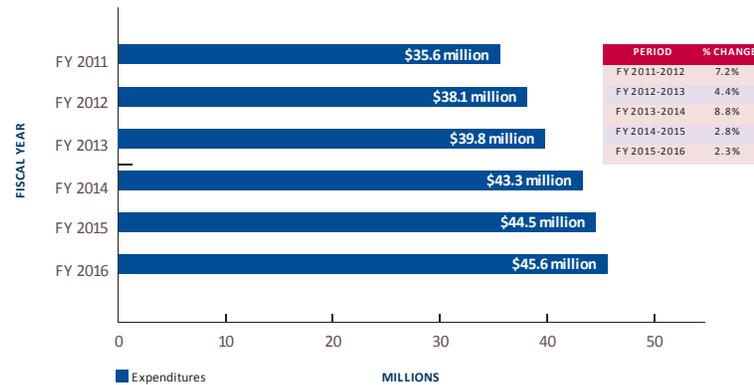
28.1%

Increase from FY 2011 to FY 2016 of total estimated expenditures for court-appointed attorneys in CPS cases for all 254 counties.

increases in both FY 2015 and FY 2016. Hopefully, this recent tendency towards moderation will become a trend.

However, even with the recent moderation, when extrapolated to the entire state, estimated costs for court-appointed attorneys (ad litem) in CPS cases grew 28.1 percent from \$35.6 million in FY 2011 to \$45.6 million in FY 2016. e

Total Estimated Expenditures for Court-Appointed Attorneys (Ad Litem) in CPS Cases For All 254 Counties



County Jails

Emergency Room Visits

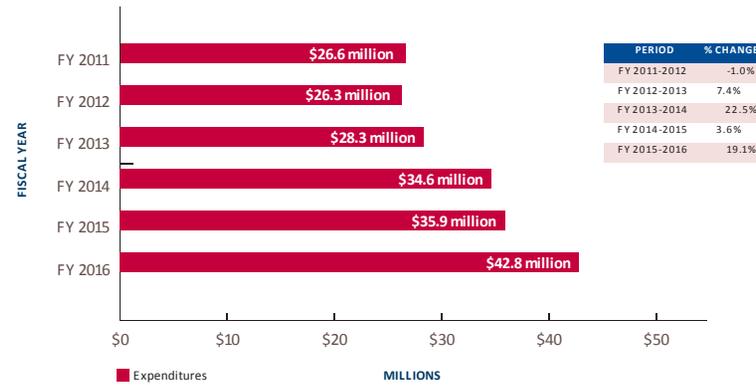
60.7%
Increase from FY 2011 to FY 2016 of total estimated expenditures for emergency room visits by jail inmates for all 254 counties.

County jails must provide medical care to all inmates and sometimes must seek assistance in hospital emergency rooms. Unfortunately, many counties do not track these costs separately from other jail or medical costs. Consequently, only 41 counties were able to

provide their expenditures for jail inmates' trips to hospital emergency rooms.

Extrapolating to all 254 counties shows emergency room expenditures of \$42.8 million by FY 2016, up 60.7 percent from FY 2011. On a percentage basis, most of that increase came in FY 2014 when expenditures rose 22.5 percent as seen in the chart below. e

Total Estimated Expenditures for Emergency Room Visits by Jail Inmates For All 254 Counties



Common issues with surveys received

- Entering text instead of numbers
- Entering calculations in the fields
- Entering a number and an explanation
- Entering broad estimates

Why was the survey important?

- Educate legislators on these expenses
- HJR 73
- Used as effective tool when testifying on caps and rollback rate reductions
- Not without controversy...
 - **Need more survey responses next time**

The next survey

- Made it better where possible
 - Listened to comments
 - Added comment field for every question
 - Eliminated some questions
- Using a new survey tool
 - Will have all your history already saved from last time
 - Will be able to print your survey afterwards
 - Look for TAC email and check your junk mail folder!
 - Custom link just for you. SurveyGizmo

Ensuring maximum participation

- Check for the email
- Notify TAC immediately of any problems
- Please take the time to answer
- Encourage others to participate

2018 Survey Schedule

- April 2, 2018 – Survey open
- April through August – Survey reminders at all TAC events
- June 5, 2018 – Reminder emails go out
- July 17, 2018 – Reminder emails again; calls from individual association leadership
- August 20, 2018 – Final reminder email
- September 17, 2018 – Survey closed
- December 2018 – Report finalized and distributed

Extras

- TAC to host webinar on the survey, along with instructions and information on answering some of the tougher questions. Date TBD.
- The survey committee is available to help answer your questions.
- We need all 254 counties to respond

Closing

- Copies of the 2016 Survey are available:
 - www.county.org
- Contact information:
 - Nathan Cradduck
 - Tom Green County Auditor
 - 325-659-6521
 - nathan.cradduck@co.tom-green.tx.us