



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Dayton, OCAPS Chair

OCAPS Officers

Chair

Carol Dayton, ACSW LISW
Consultant and Educator in
the Field of Aging

Vice Chair

Sylvia Pla-Raith
Chief of Adult Protective
Services
Cuyahoga Dept. of Senior &
Adult Services

Treasurer

Shantha Balaswamy, Ph.D
Associate Professor
The Ohio State University
College of Social Work

Secretary

Dawn Bolf
Social Program Manager
Summit County Department
of Job & Family Services
Children & Adult Services
Division

There are a series of positive images that remain with me from the Annual Conference on March 23 and 24:

- The gathering Sunday evening by several Steering Committee and Education and Resource Committee members to assemble packets, share pizza, efficient and eager, seeing for the first time the new OCAPS brochure placed in each folder;
- Comments of appreciation for ODJFS Director Lumpkin being generous in giving time to OCAPS, the first time the Department's Director has spoken at our conference;
- Nods of recognition and distress at Bonnie Brandl's description of sexual assault of ninety-four year old Mary by her abusive grandson;
- Surprise as a TV station hooked up to record Attorney General Cordray's luncheon remarks, and delight when he announced formation of a new Elder Abuse Commission;
- Participants hovering around the Public Policy table, getting directions via a hand drawn map to the Statehouse, packets for discussing increased funding for APS, and laughter

and encouragement as they went on their way to speak from their knowledge and passion;

- Hearing eager questions and seeing attentiveness to skillful workshop and plenary presenters during two days of new information;
- Laughter and storytelling at the reception as only APS folks can do it;
- ODA Director Riley staying after her opening remarks to learn from and enjoy the immediately engaging keynote Robin Rose on Tuesday;
- Hearing from both exhibitors and participants about a spirit of serious commitment expressed by so many at the conference;
- And of course, experiencing again the gratitude and appreciation expressed by county officials for the APS Worker of the Year Award, as Melanie Cooley from Franklin County received the honor.

It was a great conference. I hope you were there. If not, I hope to see you next time.

Carol Dayton, Chair
chair@ocapsohio.org

The Origins of OCAPS

Georgia J. Anetzberger, PhD

Money was the driving force in creating the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS). The state Protective Services Law for Adults was enacted in 1981. A committee of the Council on Older Persons (COOP) in Cleveland drafted the original legislation. Advocacy for its passage came from the Ohio Department of Aging and various public and voluntary agency representatives statewide. The Ohio Department of Human Services (now Ohio Department of Job and Family Services) was supportive. However, Law enactment did not bring accompanying state dollars for implementation, leaving counties reliant on already stretched and soon-to-be shrinking Title XX (now Social Services Block Grant) funding to provide Adult Protective Services (APS).

In 1984 Diana Kubovcik, Marilyn Jacobs, and I decided a statewide network was needed to resolve the problem. At the time Diana was the Older Adult Specialist with Southeast Mental Health, Marilyn staffed the Elder Abuse Task Force at the Toledo Family and Child Abuse Prevention Center, and I directed COOP and its Protective Services Consortium for Older Adults of Cuyahoga County. We invited colleagues from other parts of the state to join. The first meeting of the group was held in Columbus in January 1985. Initially, over two dozen

individuals representing multiple disciplines, sectors, systems, and locales came together to form OCAPS. What united us was an interest in APS and elder abuse. What drove us was maintaining a line item for Adult Services in the 1986-7 state budget and securing a separate line item for APS in the years ahead. We knew this effort would be neither quick nor easy. Therefore, we braced ourselves for the “long haul.”

We established a mission statement: To enhance the quality and provision of services for the prevention, identification and treatment of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation through education, advocacy and networking. Our vision, however, was to create a statewide presence for elder abuse that was “something to be reckoned with.” Accomplishing such a lofty goal, we believed, required starting with a winning project, the kind that would solidify the Steering Committee for OCAPS, give the group name recognition, and draw others to the cause. We decided to hold a conference for this purpose. We did, and hundreds attended from all parts of Ohio, hungry for information about the Law and elder abuse and seeking a way out of the isolation that comes from early interest in a not-too-popular topic.

What was to become the Annual Conference was considered only a first step for OCAPS. The dream of those who created the group was much bigger, namely: 1) To fund the Protective Services Law for Adults; 2) To promote additional public policy to protect vulnerable adults; 3) To educate professionals and the public about elder abuse, and; 4) To stimulate models for problem detection, prevention and treatment. Early activities toward this end, in addition to the Annual Conference, included Elder Abuse Prevention Week designation, quarterly newsletters, fact sheets, and technical assistance to local agencies on program development. Advocacy for more funding and legislative change through testimony, letter writing campaigns, and meetings with elected and appointed public officials was also initiated.

Twenty-five years later the original dream is still credible, and our mission is even more critical. OCAPS, the nation’s longest continuous state elder abuse network, has accomplished much throughout the years, thanks to a shared vision and commitment to that vision. The challenges we face today require a renewed commitment to keep the dream alive and visible until it becomes a reality.

Taking the Plunge to Get to Know Your Legislator

Sylvia Pla-Raith, Co-Chair OCAPS Public Policy Committee

I realize it can be scary to think about meeting with a legislator for the first time. I know I was. However, let's face the facts that legislators are people and they enjoy hearing from their constituents. This is the main reason that they have chosen politics. OCAPS had a very successful effort to teach people how to reach out to them during our annual conference. Our goal is to advance needed advocacy for elder abuse victims in Ohio

and we need your help! We need more people like you to meet with your legislator to advocate for improved elder abuse services in Ohio. Find out today which legislators represent you and your service area. Over the course of time, develop a relationship with your legislators. This will help your official request on behalf of elder abuse victims and the need to improve Ohio's safety net. I am asking you to call and/

or email your legislator's office and let his/her aide know that you would like to arrange a time to visit them in the next few weeks. If you get a voice mail, it is ok to leave a message stating the reason for your call. Your legislator or aide will get back to you. It is very important to prepare a clear and concise statement. Email always works great too!

Sample Email asking for an invite to meet with your legislator:

Dear Representative or Senator _____:

Hello my name is Sylvia Pla-Raith and I am a Steering Committee Member of the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (OCAPS) and the Chief Supervisor for Adult Protective Services (APS) at Cuyahoga County Department of Senior and Adult Services. In addition, I am an informed citizen from Aurora, Ohio who chooses to exercise the rights and duties of citizenship. OCAPS is requesting to meet with you at your Statehouse Office on Monday, March 23rd or Tuesday, March 24th 2009 to advocate on the behalf of the frail and elderly of Ohio.

Every elderly Ohioan should have access to a safety net that protects them from adult abuse, neglect and/or financial exploitation. Earmarking needed dollars for Adult Protective Services (APS) in the state budget is critical to ensure Ohio maintains specialized services to effectively address elder maltreatment. In addition APS workers must have access to emergency services for Ohioans who are victims of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation.

Ohio is far behind many other states that have had the wisdom and wherewithal to ensure the protection of older adults. It is time that legislators like you take the cause of the vulnerable adults who otherwise will go unnoticed. We need your voice in the legislative house to support APS in our state.

We are counting on you to accept OCAPS's request and agree to meet with an OCAPS representative next month.

On behalf of the elderly thank you for your time and consideration.

**Sincerely,
Sylvia M. Pla-Raith**

Get to Know Your Legislator cont.

Currently Ohio has only designated \$500,000.00 for Adult Protective Services across 88 counties. Superficially, it appears that counties that are not reporting abuse have a limited occurrence of elder abuse. It would be more realistic to conclude that the lack of reporting reflects the problem of understaffing at the county level, as well as society's denial of the existence of elder abuse. Ohio needs to designate additional dollars for Adult Protective Services to ensure that every Ohio resident regardless of where they reside has access to a full-time APS professional. Elder abuse victims deserve the right to consistent access to Adult Protective Services to ensure their personal safety, continued independence and human dignity." ...

In 2007-2008 SFY Ohio recorded over 16,000 incidences of abuse allegations:

- Adult Protective Services staffing levels, case acceptance and ongoing case management varies county to county
- Only 49 counties have staff solely dedicated to APS duties
- Some counties have staff performing APS and Child Protection
- Some counties have staff with either split duties within the agencies
- Some counties contract APS services to a designated agency
- Research demonstrates that counties with designated APS staff have the most allegations
- Counties with no staff have the fewest (as little as 1

allegation for the entire year)

We need acknowledgement by the Governor and state legislators that elder abuse deserves the same level of attention as children.

- Stronger State level leadership at the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
- Stronger policy and programming to address elder abuse more effectively
- Increase data collection and staff training
- Increase public awareness of elder abuse to an issue of primary concern for the state

So get busy and meet with and/or contact your legislator! What are you waiting for?

Visit our website!

For the latest news, photos and more visit the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services online at:

www.OCAPSOhio.org

2009 OCAPS Conference Wrap-Up

Andrew Capehart, OCAPS Education & Resource Chair

The twenty-fourth annual OCAPS conference, *New Perspectives: Elder Abuse in a Changing World*, was held March 23 & 24, 2009 at the Renaissance Hotel in downtown Columbus, OH. This year's conference featured notable speakers from Ohio and across the country presenting information on topics such as domestic violence, sexual violence, common medication issues & older adults, legislative advocacy, stress reduction, and more.

Day one of the conference was opened by Ohio Department of Job & Family Services Director Douglas Lumpkin. Director Lumpkin discussed the current state of Adult Protective Services (APS) and initiatives in his office toward enhancing the program across Ohio. Bonnie Brandl, Director of the National Clearinghouse on Abuse in Later Life, followed Director Lumpkin with a keynote on understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault in older adult victims. Ohio Attorney General Richard Cordray spoke to attendees at a luncheon on day one about his office's plan to continue with the multidisciplinary efforts of the previously convened Elder Abuse Steering Committee.

Four different workshop sessions preceded and followed the luncheon and included a panel of experts on legislative advocacy

in preparation for conference attendee volunteers to meet with state legislators on day two of the conference. Panel participants spoke about the most effective ways of conveying the importance of continued funding and support for the APS program. Over 20 legislative visits by attendees and OCAPS members were made on day two of the conference at the State Capital to advocate for increased funding for APS. See the follow-up article on these efforts on page three in *The Sentinel*.

Day one was concluded with a plenary panel on collaboration between APS and behavioral health professionals. Panel speakers discussed three distinct collaborative projects in Ohio across both rural and urban settings. The panel was sponsored by the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities' Older Ohioans Behavioral Health Network.

Day two of the conference began with remarks by Ohio Department of Aging Director Barbara Riley. Director Riley spoke of her office's efforts toward combating elder abuse and work currently being done to unify the state's long-term care budget. Following Director Riley was Robin Rose, a private speaker and trainer, who presented information of a hands-on nature on coping with stress and communicating in the workplace.

Workshops, which were repeated in the afternoon, followed Ms. Rose's keynote address and included a session on APS 101 for both new APS professionals and non-APS professionals who want to learn more about the specifics of working in the field.

An awards luncheon took place on day two to honor the OCAPS APS Worker of the Year. Sandra Holt, Deputy Director for the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services moderated the award ceremony which featured Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown and Franklin County Office on Aging Director Antonia Carroll. Melanie Cooley, Franklin County Office on Aging APS Case Manager, received the award and a \$1000 scholarship to attend the 2009 National Adult Protective Services Association conference in San Antonio, TX.

OCAPS wishes to thank all the attendees, speakers, and sponsors that made this year's conference such a great success. It is through the continued support of these individuals that OCAPS is able to offer such a diverse conference for those that work so hard everyday toward ending elder abuse.

Photos of this year's conference along with the conference program are available on the OCAPS website at www.ocapsohio.org on the Conference page.

OCAPS Membership



Barbara Van Wormer, OCAPS Membership Committee Chair

Because you are reading this newsletter, we know that you care about seniors and how some are mistreated. You care that there are tools to identify it, what interventions to use when it is discovered and how to prevent further abuse.

Your concern and involvement is vital to all that OCAPS does. In these challenging times, your support is even more important. Besides hosting excellent conferences each year, providing support and information and networking opportunities, OCAPS is involved in making our public officials aware of the extent of elder mistreatment in local communities and of the need for continued services. Numbers are important: they are a concrete measure of support. If you are not already an OCAPS member, won't you please consider joining this nationally recognized coalition? The OCAPS Steering Committee is grateful for your continued support.

Thanks to our 2009 OCAPS Education and Resource Committee for a wonderful conference

- Patrick Bailey-Montgomery County Department of Job & family Services
- Dawn Bolf- Summit County Department of Job & Family Services
- Andrew Capehart-Franklin County Office on Aging
- Patty Ciripompa- Fairfield County Department of Job & Family Services
- Carol Dayton- Consultant & Educator in the Field of Aging
- Frank Fleischer- Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
- Charlie Holderman- Montgomery County Department of Job & Family Services
- Laurice Roquemore- Franklin County Office on Aging
- Jo Simonsen- Ohio Domestic Violence Network
- Jennifer Ann Wagner- Bowling Green State University
- Lorrie Warren - Summit County Probate Court

The Sentinel

Co-editors:

Patty Ciripompa

-Social Services Director, Fairfield County Department of Job & Family Services

Andrew Capehart

-APS Supervisor, Franklin County Office on Aging and OCAPS Education & Resource Chair

Contributing Staff:

Carol Dayton

-OCAPS Chair & Consultant and Educator in the Field of Aging

Georgia J. Anetzberger, PhD

Sylvia Pla-Raith

-Chief Supervisor, Cuyahoga Dept. of Senior and Adult Services and Co-Chair OCAPS Public Policy Committee

Barbara Van Wormer

-Senior Services Coordinator, Lucas County Department of Job & Family Services and OCAPS Membership Committee Chair

OCAPS welcomes contributions to our newsletter! If you are aware of exciting research, upcoming events, or promising practices drop us a line at newsletter@ocapsohio.org and let us know.