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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.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Carol Dayton, OCAPS Chair & Consultant and Educator in the Field of Aging

At a budget strategy session I attended recently at the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the organizations being represented were asked a compelling question: "What is the impact of the current state budget cuts on seniors being served now?" There are projections of the impact of cuts that are looming ahead, but the question was focused on now. We were each asked to explore this with our members and bring back more information. If you care to add your answer, please email me at chair@ocapsohio.org.

The last several weeks have been full of OCAPS activity on two parallel tracks. We have been finalizing the Annual Conference details and planning the state budget advocacy efforts, including those that will occur during the conference. Both of these efforts are being led by excellent committees, Education and Resources chaired by Andrew Capehart, and Public Policy co-chaired by Phyllis Carlson Riehm and Sylvia Pla-Raith. Please read the details on both efforts elsewhere in this newsletter. Addressing the needs of the organization are two other vital committees: Membership, chaired by Barbara Van

Wormer, and Development, chaired by Ursel McElroy. If not already an OCAPS member, consider joining and then add your voice to one of the committees. All four committees will welcome you.

OCAPS has been active in developing a broad budget strategy for aging services in a network of organizations convened by AARP. It never fails to surprise me, yes even after all these years, that so many of our colleagues are unaware of the inadequate funding for APS. We are developing allies through these contacts. In addition, OCAPS and the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association have joined forces to speak with one voice in our budget advocacy to increase funding for APS. OCAPS is pursuing three goals for the vulnerable and frightened older adults in Ohio: Restore Dignity, Seek Justice and Expand APS!

OCAPS has four Regional Affiliates that can form their own network, using the ODJFS Regional Training Center map. Each Affiliate chair is also a source of contact and information about OCAPS advocacy and education efforts. This is a two way street,

bringing to the Steering Committee local concerns. The current chairs are: Southwest – Charlie Holderman (holdec@odjfs.state.oh.us), Central – Andrew Capehart (abcapeha@

franklincountyohio.gov), Northwest – Craig Hunter (huntec@odjfs.state.oh.us) and Northeast – Bernadine Brooks (brookb@odjfs.state.oh.us).

It is when we all pull together in the same direction that we know our greatest strength.

Carol Dayton, Chair

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Barbara Van Wormer, Senior Services Coordinator, Lucas County Department of Job & Family Services

We are ninety strong!

If you are reading this newsletter and are not an OCAPS member, we hope you will consider joining. Your support helps OCAPS provide an annual conference for those who work directly with elder abuse issues and those who work more generally with the senior population. The conference gives you the opportunity to acquire new skills, learn new resources and network with others.

OCAPS also does more. For example, this newsletter is the work of the OCAPS Education and Resource Committee. The Public Policy Committee researches what is going on with the state legislature and provides information and testimony when it comes time to advocate for more resources for adult protective services.

Oftentimes, our closest friends and supporters, like yourself, are not fully aware of the delicate balance required to maintain these services.

The economic climate across the nation makes this even more of a challenge now. Your commitment means a great deal and numbers equal grass roots support. If you have not already joined OCAPS, we urge you to consider a membership today. You may be as active or as silent as you like.

Individual memberships are \$35.00 for one year and organizational memberships are \$100.00. Membership forms are available on our website at www.ocapsohio.org.

NAME THE NEWSLETTER CONTEST

In our previous issue, we asked readers to submit their suggestions for a new name to the newsletter. Thanks to all who submitted names! The winner is ... Jo Simonsen, Ohio Domestic Violence Network. Her suggestion of *The Sentinel* was chosen out of all the submissions.

OCAPS is a statewide coalition that strives to enhance the provision of services to adults at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation through education and advocacy.

OCAPS 2009 CONFERENCE UPDATE

Andrew Capehart, APS Supervisor - Franklin County Office on Aging; Education & Resource Chair OCAPS

If you attend one conference this year, attend the 24th Annual OCAPS Conference **New Perspectives: Elder Abuse in a Changing World**. This year's conference will be held at the Renaissance Hotel in Downtown Columbus and promises dynamic nationally and locally recognized speakers presenting a wide spectrum of workshops, keynotes, and panels. Topics include domestic violence, collaboration and multidisciplinary approaches, stress reduction, sexual abuse, APS 101, and more. This conference is ideal for both the novice staff member who needs an introduction to the complex world of elder abuse and

the advanced practitioner who wants to enhance his or her knowledge base.

As budgets narrow and the availability of funds shrink, agencies across Ohio are finding it difficult to send their staff to continuing education opportunities. The annual OCAPS conference provides a "one stop shop" for those who want to broaden their skills in dealing with abused, vulnerable adults. Those who work exclusively in the field of elder mistreatment will benefit from attendance as much as those who observe it only as a moderate part of their practice.

If you have attended an OCAPS conference in the past several years, you will receive a registration packet in the mail. For those who are new to our conference, feel free to visit the OCAPS website at www.ocapsohio.org and click on the Conference page. The OCAPS hotel rate of \$101 a night will only be available through 5:00 p.m. on March 6, 2009 so act fast!

Save the Date!

The 24th Annual OCAPS Conference New Perspectives: Elder Abuse in a Changing World

March 23 & 24, 2009
Columbus, OH

Renaissance Hotel – Downtown Columbus

Program available at www.ocapsohio.org.

BREAKING NEWS!

www.ocapsohio.org

Please visit our website for the most current information, trends and news alerts regarding Adult Protective Services.

Visit us at
www.ocapsohio.org

SPECIAL REPORT from the OCAPS Public Policy Committee

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

The Numbers Really do Matter!

In 2007 – 2008 SFY, a total of 16,089 cumulative allegations and incidents of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation were reported by counties to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. According to experts in the field of elder abuse, only one in five cases is reported to the mandated authorities. In Ohio, this means that over 64,300 incidents of elder abuse were likely unreported, leaving potentially thousands of elderly victims without intervention. These staggering figures emphasize the need for fully operational and adequately funded Adult Protective Services. Despite the current economy and the budgetary constraints of the state, the time to advocate for the prioritization of APS is now!

Facts to consider:

- 17% of Ohio's population is age 60 plus
- 33% of those individuals have at least one disability
- The 60 plus population is expected to grow over the next several decades
- Due to lack of APS funding, Child Protective Service workers often perform APS functions
- At the county level, the shortage of trained Adult Protective Service workers is a threat to the provision of protective services.

Questions Remain: Is APS to serve a “safety net” for all Ohioans?

Currently Ohio has designated \$500,000.00 for Adult Protective Services across 88 counties. Could it be true that the counties not reporting abuse have no elderly victims or a limited occurrence of elder abuse? Or, is it more realistic to conclude that the lack of reporting is the result of a society in denial?

The accompanying statistical study (Balaswamy) makes a compelling argument for the relationship between reporting trends and availability of staff, as well as the type of staff who perform APS functions at the county level. The conclusions we can draw from the facts of this analysis are clear, and support the assumption that all of Ohio's elderly citizens deserve the right to consistent access to Adult Protective Services – for the restoration of their personal safety, independence, and dignity.

APS Staffing Patterns Tied to Statewide Incident Rates

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

Several years ago, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services implemented an automated system for the statewide reporting of APS incidents from all 88 counties. On a quarterly basis, county Job & Family Service agencies submit the number of reports received by their APS departments to the state, utilizing this system.

A two-year review of these incident reports indicates a disproportionate variability in the number of APS referrals by county. Some counties have reported no incidents of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation, while others reported relatively few cases. Larger counties, such as Cuyahoga and Hamilton, have reported consistently higher numbers of incidents.

Upon further examination of the statistics, a pattern emerged that suggests a correlation between the number of staff dedicated to APS functions and no, or few, reported incidents of elder mistreatment. However, there has been no evidence to explain the reasons that some counties submit no reports, and others report fewer incidents than counties of similar size.

In order to eliminate conjecture, a decision was made by the OCAPS Policy Committee to further analyze the data submitted by each county. The primary goal of this in-depth analysis was to track variability in reporting among counties, and to clarify reasons for the reporting discrepancies. The information obtained from this analysis is expected to facilitate discussions about how to identify and eliminate barriers to reporting elder mistreatment.

The OCAPS Policy Committee presents these findings in the hope that this analysis will assist in advocating for change within the APS system, and will provide the impetus for counties to review their existing policies regarding Adult Protective Services.

Four quarters worth of data (Cumulative Allegations and Incidents by County for SFY 2007-08) were used as the basis for this analysis. Additional data, including the county profiles of APS workers and classification of the counties by region, was inputted and analyzed. Data from all sources was entered and analyzed using the SPSS statistical package. The findings are presented below:

Table 1: Who Performs APS Duties

Type of Caseworkers	Frequency	Percent
APS	61	70.9
CPS	21	24.4
Both	4	4.7
Total	86	100.0
Missing = 2		

Table 2: Region By Who Performs APS Duties In Counties

Region	Who performs APS duties?			Total
	APS	CPS	BOTH	
1	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	00.0% (0)	100.0% (9)
2	47.1% (8)	52.9% (9)	00.0% (0)	100.0% (17)
3	92.3% (12)	00.0% (0)	7.7% (1)	100.0% (13)
4	37.5% (3)	50.0% (4)	12.5% (1)	100.0% (8)
5	66.7% (6)	33.3% (3)	00.0% (0)	100.0% (9)
6	88.9% (8)	11.1% (1)	00.0% (0)	100.0% (9)
7	81.8% (9)	9.1% (1)	9.1% (1)	100.0% (11)
8	70.0% (7)	20.0% (2)	10.0% (1)	100.0% (10)

Of the 88 counties, over 70% have caseworkers who are exclusively assigned to perform APS related activities (70.1%, n=61). One quarter of the counties have CPS caseworkers performing APS activities (24.4%, n=21). In about 5% of the counties, caseworkers perform both APS and CPS activities (4.7%, n=4).

Two counties reported no incidents of elder abuse (see Table 1). In half of the regions (3, 4, 7, & 8), the caseworkers perform both APS and CPS related tasks. In nearly all of the regions there are counties where CPS workers are required to undertake APS related tasks. (See Table 2)

In the majority of counties, the APS positions tend to be full time. However, 13% (n=11) indicated that none of their workers is dedicated to APS functions. Approximately 12% (n=12) of the counties reported that they have both part time and full time APS positions. (See Table 3)

Overall, 23 out of 86 counties surveyed in Ohio lack appropriated operational structure to process APS cases. Lack of both available and identifiable APS staff within the system appears to be a major barrier to reporting allegations of elder mistreatment by mandated reporters. In the absence of an appropriate system for receiving and processing reports of elder mistreatment, it would follow that there is greater likelihood of the continued victimization of elderly in these counties, raising a valid concern to the public and the elderly.

Table 3: Whether APS Jobs are Full-Time, Part-Time or Combination of both in counties

APS Jobs	Frequency	Percent
no staff	11	12.8
full-time	53	61.6
part-time	12	14.0
both	10	11.6
Total	86	100.0
Missing 2		

The number of APS staff in each county ranged from zero (having no staff) to 35 designated staff. Most counties have either one (38.6%) or two (22.7%) designated APS staff. A small percent of counties reported having more than three APS staff (13.6%). (See Table 4)

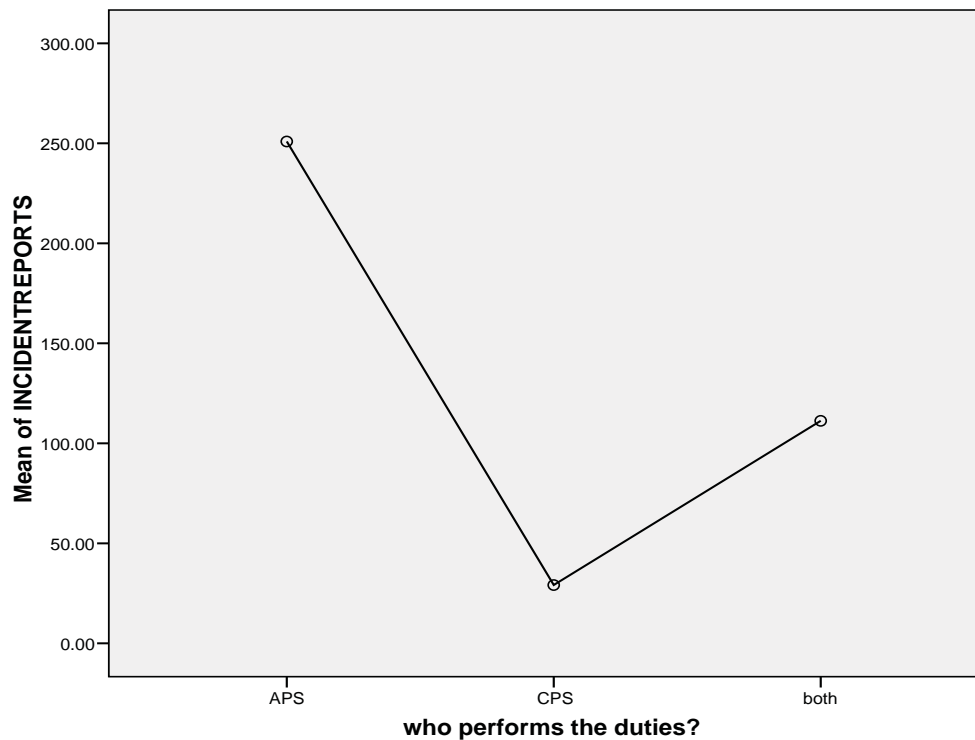
Table 4: Total number of staff

Number of staff	Frequency	Percent
0.00	11	12.5
1.00	34	38.6
2.00	20	22.7
3.00	7	8.0
4.00	1	1.1
5.00	4	4.5
6.00	1	1.1
7.00	1	1.1
8.00	2	2.3
9.00	3	3.4
14.00	1	1.1
20.00	1	1.1
25.00	1	1.1
35.00	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0

An analysis of the relationship between number of staff, presence of designated APS staff, and number of reports received from the community in the 88 counties indicates a strong correlation among these variables. Both the presence of APS staff and number of APS staff were correlated to actual number of incident reports. Counties that have an APS staff tended to report higher incident rates of elder mistreatment ($r = .30, p < .01$). Analysis showed that the higher the number of APS staff in the county, the higher the number of incident reports received ($r = .50, p < .001$).

Further exploration of the relationship between level of staffing and actual reported incidents supports that counties who have no APS staff tend to report lower incidents of APS referrals (mean = 33.0; sd = 23.0; range = 00 – 56) than those counties with designated APS staff (mean = 223.64; sd = 181.22; range = 00 -2,384).

Figure 1: Type Of Staff Performing APS Tasks By Mean Number Of Incident Reports



As illustrated in Figure 1, the counties differ significantly in their reporting of annual incident rates of elder mistreatment based upon the type of staff (APS, CPS, or Both) they assign to perform APS work ($F = 5.85$, $df = 2/81$, $p < .01$). On average, counties that have exclusively designated APS staff tend to report higher incidents of elder mistreatment cases (mean = 250.92; $sd = 374.25$) than those counties assigning APS functions to Child Protective Services workers (mean = 29.15, $sd = 26.62$), or to both CPS and APS (mean = 111.25; $sd = 103.05$). The performance expectations for staff who are assigned APS duties that are outside the scope of their area of primary responsibility are likely to be more ambiguous, potentially resulting in decreased commitment to and prioritization of APS tasks.

Recommendations and Policy Implications

- **Non-reporting agencies:** Nearly one quarter of APS departments did not submit any data to the state's APS automated system. Regardless of the region, the majority of the non-reporting agencies were from smaller counties. Currently, submission of incident reports is voluntary, with no consequence for not reporting. With no information from these non-reporting counties, it remains unclear as to whether there are no incidents of elder abuse, a lack of compliance, or a lack of staff driving the absence of reporting.
 - The recommendation is for the state to mandate reporting of APS incidents so that the actual incident rate of elder mistreatment can be accurately gauged.

- **Adequate Staffing:** The number of full-time staff dedicated to APS work correlated significantly with the number of incidents reported. Counties that reported having full time APS workers reported a higher incidence of elder mistreatment than counties with part time staff. The amount of time dedicated to APS activities may influence the availability of workers to receive and process APS cases.
 - The recommendation is for the state to ensure adequate staffing for APS in all 88 counties.
- **Staff Qualifications:** Counties that have designated APS staff reported a greater number of incidents of elder mistreatment than counties who assign CPS workers, or a combination of CPS and APS workers to investigate and process APS referrals.
 - The assumption that CPS workers can perform APS functions does not take into account the specific skill sets required by APS workers. The importance of the skills specific to working with elderly victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation cannot be over- emphasized. The recommendation is for each agency to ensure that APS workers are trained and equipped with skills specific to this particular role.

Editor's Note: As of the time of publication, reporting of data by counties to the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services has been mandated under Ohio Revised Code 5101.72.

The OCAPS Newsletter is published four times a year by the Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services (with support from the Franklin County Office on Aging and the Fairfield County Department of Job & Family Services). Please send information for publication to: Andrew Capehart, Education & Resource Committee, newsletter@ocapsohio.org.