Protecting North Carolina’s Vulnerable and Elder Adults

The Measure of a Community
How Many Times Have You

- Heard it
- Read it

“Abuse of Vulnerable and Elder Adults is a Serious and Growing Problem”
The problem with elder abuse is it lacks a coherent public identity.

The public has not embraced elder abuse as a policy issue, so it hovers below the nation’s consciousness.

The field of family violence has largely ignored elder abuse.
FEDERAL DOLLARS SPENT ON ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- 91% ($6.7 Billion) - Child Abuse
- 7% ($520 Million) - Domestic Abuse
- 2% ($153.5 Million) - Elder Abuse

Source: Congressional Research Service
Agree/Disagree

- It is estimated that for every 1 case of elder abuse reported about 5 or more cases go unreported.
- Elder abuse most frequently occurs in the home and is perpetrated by relatives or caregivers.
- Older adults who are abused are 3 times more likely to die within 10 years than those who are not.

2005 National Center on Elder Abuse, Washington, DC
It’s closer than you think…

It’s happening… to your constituents in your community it could even happen in your family
Current APS Law

Article 6, Chapter 108A

Enacted over 30 years ago
First Elder Abuse law in U.S.
North Carolina’s Current APS System

All reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation must be made to County Departments of Social Services (DSS)

DSSs have a mandate and authority to respond
APS Task Force

Established and met from 2002-2006
Issued report and recommendations which recognized a failing system

- Underfunded
- Understaffed
- Underserved
- Under recognized
- Under reported
Broad Support for Change

AARP
NCAOA
NCACDSS
Adult Day Services Association
Governor's Advisory Council on Aging
Vulnerable Adult Protection System Pilot

Recommendations Made by the APS Task Force to the NC Study Commission on Aging include:

- Appropriate funding to design, evaluate and implement a time limited pilot program of APS reform – Vulnerable Adult Protection System (VAPS)

Funding for:
- Increased staff for 9 county DSS pilots
- Public awareness and education campaign
- Essential services
- Evaluation
What We Know...

- We know that the numbers of vulnerable adults being abused, neglected and exploited will only increase.
- We know that vulnerability to abuse, neglect and exploitation increases with age.
- We know that our system must be better prepared to respond.
The moral test of a government is not only how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped; but also those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly.

Hubert Humphrey
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APS Task Force Report to NC Study Commission on Aging: