

**ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES FACT SHEET**  
**January 31, 2012**

**Overview**

Abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults is a serious problem in the country and in Vermont; Adult Protective Services is the cornerstone of protecting vulnerable adults

The investigative and protection activities of APS are governed by Chapter 69 of Title 33 of the Vermont Statutes Annotated.

- investigate allegations of abuse, neglect and exploitation
- address identified problems or prevent further abuse from occurring
- provide information about alternatives and services
- increase the reporting of suspected abuse

If a reported allegation or incident does not meet the definition of abuse or vulnerable adult as set forth in Title 33 V.S.A. § 6902, the reporter or alleged victim may be referred to an appropriate service agency.

APS does not provide direct care or services to individuals, nor does it provide on-going case management. Partners in protecting vulnerable adults include the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), the Home Health Agencies, the Department of Mental Health, local mental health and developmental services agencies, the Vermont Center for Independent Living, Disability Rights Vermont, local and state police, the department's Office of Public Guardian and Medicaid Fraud and Residential Abuse Unit (MFRAU) of the Attorney Generals Office, the Division of Licensing and the Office of Professional Regulations (OPR)

**IN CY 2011**, our APS unit averaged about **220 reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation each month** or roughly **2640/year**. This is **up significantly from 1530 in FY2005** but **down slightly from the 2,791** cases reported in FY2010

**In CY2011**, about half of these reports (or 107/month) resulted in an investigation or **1289 opened investigations** for the year. This is **up significantly from FY2005 when 625 investigations were opened, but only a slight increase over the 1258 investigations undertaken in FY2010**.

One year ago, there were 400 unassigned cases in a backlog; today there are none.

Reaching this milestone has been neither straightforward nor easy. As I testified before a joint committee last summer, as we were eliminating the backlog, a new queue was forming and climbed to over 300 in mid-August.

One year ago we had 4 permanent investigators; today we have 11

Investigators gained experience and have been able to manage more cases

We created a special financial exploitation unit

Current caseloads average 31/investigator with a range of 5 – 55; most investigators have caseloads between 30 and 35

Moving forward

Launched a new data tracking system designed specifically for use with Adult Protective Service

We are recruiting for a second program specialist

Had a national consultant examine workings of our current system and to suggest improvements moving forward. I have asked our DAIL Advisory Board to review this report with us and will also be presenting the consultant's findings to the Senate health and Welfare Committee

To report an instance of possible abuse:

- **Toll-Free:** 1-800-564-1612
- **Phone:** (802) 871-3317
- **Fax:** (802) 871-3318
- **Online:** [Abuse Reporting Form](#)

<http://www.dlp.vermont.gov/protection>

### **What Can *You* Do to Prevent Elder Abuse?**

- *Report suspected mistreatment* to your local adult protective services agency or law enforcement. Although a situation may have already been investigated, if you believe circumstances are getting worse, continue to speak out.
- *Keep in contact* – Talk with your older friends, neighbors, and relatives. Maintaining communication will help decrease isolation, a risk factor for mistreatment. It will also give them a chance to talk about any problems they may be experiencing.
- *Be aware of the possibility of abuse* – Look around and take note of what may be happening with your older neighbors and acquaintances. Do they seem lately to be withdrawn, nervous, fearful, sad, or anxious, especially around certain people, when they have not seemed so in the past?
- *Contact your local Area Agency on Aging* office to identify local programs and sources of support, such as *Meals on Wheels*. These programs help elders to maintain health, well-being, and independence – a good defense against abuse.
- *Volunteer* – There are many local opportunities to become involved in programs that provide assistance and support for seniors.

- *World Elder Abuse Awareness Day* - Elder abuse is a global issue. Contact your local aging services organizations to find out how your community will observe World Day. Help to raise awareness by talking about the issue.
- *Learn more about the issue* - Visit the *National Center on Elder Abuse* website at [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov).