

**US House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies**

**Hearing**

**Tuesday, March 25, 2014 10:00 AM**

**Written Testimony Submitted by the  
National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)  
Kathleen M. Quinn, Executive Director**

***1,000 Thousand Victims A Day***

The \$25 million Elder Justice Act Funding Request for the HHS Administration on Community Living/Administration on Aging is urgently needed to adequately respond to victims as described below:

*A state Adult Protective Services (APS) worker responded to a call about an 83-year-old woman living in her home under deplorable conditions, bedridden and suffering from dementia. Her 52-year-old son lived with her as her caregiver.*

*The woman appeared to have been neglected for an extended period of time and was confined to her bed, living in her own filth and infested with maggots. Her unemployed son had taken over \$50,000 from his mother's bank accounts to buy a car and to gamble at casinos.*

*Also living in the home was a 48-year-old severely developmentally disabled daughter, also found living in filth and without adequate nutrition, as well as numerous malnourished dogs.*

*The APS worker took emergency measures to get medical evaluations and treatment for the mother and daughter, found an alternative living situation for the mother, worked with a local disabilities advocacy organization to place and assist the daughter, contacted animal control to take the dogs, had the house cleaned up. APS also referred the case to law enforcement, resulting in the son being arrested and charged with felony counts of criminal neglect and theft.<sup>1</sup>*

The above is a description of an actual (and not atypical) elder and vulnerable abuse case that was handled by APS. Without APS, this older woman and her developmentally disabled adult daughter

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<sup>1</sup>Quinn, K. & Benson, W. (2012). The States' Elder Abuse Services: A System Still in Search of Support. *Generations*. 36-3, 68.

would have continued to suffer in the terrible conditions in which they were held captive, and their abuser son and brother would have never been held accountable for his cruelty and greed.

Research tells us that there are more elder abuse victims than victims of other types of abuse such as child abuse and domestic violence.<sup>2</sup> Research also estimates that ten percent of persons 60 and older are abused every year. This means that of the 10,000 people a day who are turning 65, 1,000 of them are, have been or will likely be victims of elder abuse.<sup>3</sup>

*Yet, older victims and adult victims with disabilities are the only victims of crime and abuse who receive no designated federal support for services. This is true even though federal support and attention to other types of abuse have been successful, resulting in, for example, reduced incidences of both child abuse and domestic violence homicides.<sup>4</sup>*

Similar success can eventually be achieved if the Elder Justice Act is funded, starting with the FY 2015 modest request of \$25 million to begin the development of a national infrastructure for Adult Protective Services.

Elder abuse causes great physical and emotional suffering, and results in greatly increased rates of hospitalization and premature death. *It is also extremely expensive, to the victims and their families, to financial institutions, and to taxpayers.* There are many older persons, for example, who must rely on Medicaid to pay for their long-term care after all their funds have been stolen from them.

APS Programs comprise the only victim services system in place in every community to go into the homes of these vulnerable adults to protect them from further abuse. Without federal support and leadership, APS Programs have evolved independently in every state, meaning that the training, standards, eligibility thresholds and resources available can differ dramatically from state to state and even from county to county. There are no national definitions, standards of practice, training and educational requirements, supervisor protocols, caseload standards, data systems or other basic prerequisites of well-developed social services programs.

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<sup>2</sup> Sedlak, A.J., Mettenburg, J., Basena, M., Petta, I., McPherson, K., Greene, A., and Li, S. (2010). Fourth National Incidence Study of Child Abuse and Neglect (NIS-4): Report to Congress. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse\\_neglect/natl\\_incid/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/abuse_neglect/natl_incid/index.html) .

ONE DEPARTMENT: OVERVIEW of ACTIVITIES ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2008-2009. DHHS Office of Women's Health <http://www.womenshealth.gov/owh/pub/violence-against-women.cfm>.

<sup>3</sup> Acierno, R., Hernandez, M. A., Amstadter, A. B., Resnick, H. S., Steve, K., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D. G. (2010). Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, neglectful, and financial abuse in the Congressional Record Feb. 10, 2003. <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/R?r108:FLD001:S02121> United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study. American Journal of Public Health, 100, 292-297.

<sup>4</sup> Dugan, L, Nagin, D & Rosenfeld, R. (2003) Do Domestic Violence Services Save Lives? NIJ Journal. 250 NIJ Journal 250 (November 2003): 20–25, NCJ 196548.

It must be noted that APS in thirty-four states do receive funding through the federal Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) wherein each state decides how to allocate the federal block grant among its varied social services programs. In a recent NAPSA poll, 71% of the respondents in states which rely on SSBG funding for APS stated that loss of the funding would be either a very significant blow to, or would completely eliminate, their APS programs. Although it is sometimes stated that SSBG funds duplicate other federal funding, that is clearly not the case with APS, which receives no other federal monies. Social Services Block Grant funds are essential to maintaining APS services for vulnerable adult victims in every state, and the additional, APS-specific funding through the Elder Justice Act is critically needed to bring all APS programs up to minimum standards nationwide.

After over three decades of hearings and reports on the issue of elder abuse, we respectfully request that this Committee and this Congress heed the cries of these hidden victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation by supporting both Elder Justice Act and SSBG funding to insure that an adequate protective services system is available to victims in every community.

Thank You,



**Kathleen Quinn**  
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National Adult Protective Services Association