

# Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation of At-Risk Adults

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Presentation to: GA SENATE AGING STUDY COMMITTEE

Date: November 19, 2012



Georgia Department of Human Services

# Vision, Mission and Core Values

## *Vision*

Stronger Families for a Stronger Georgia.

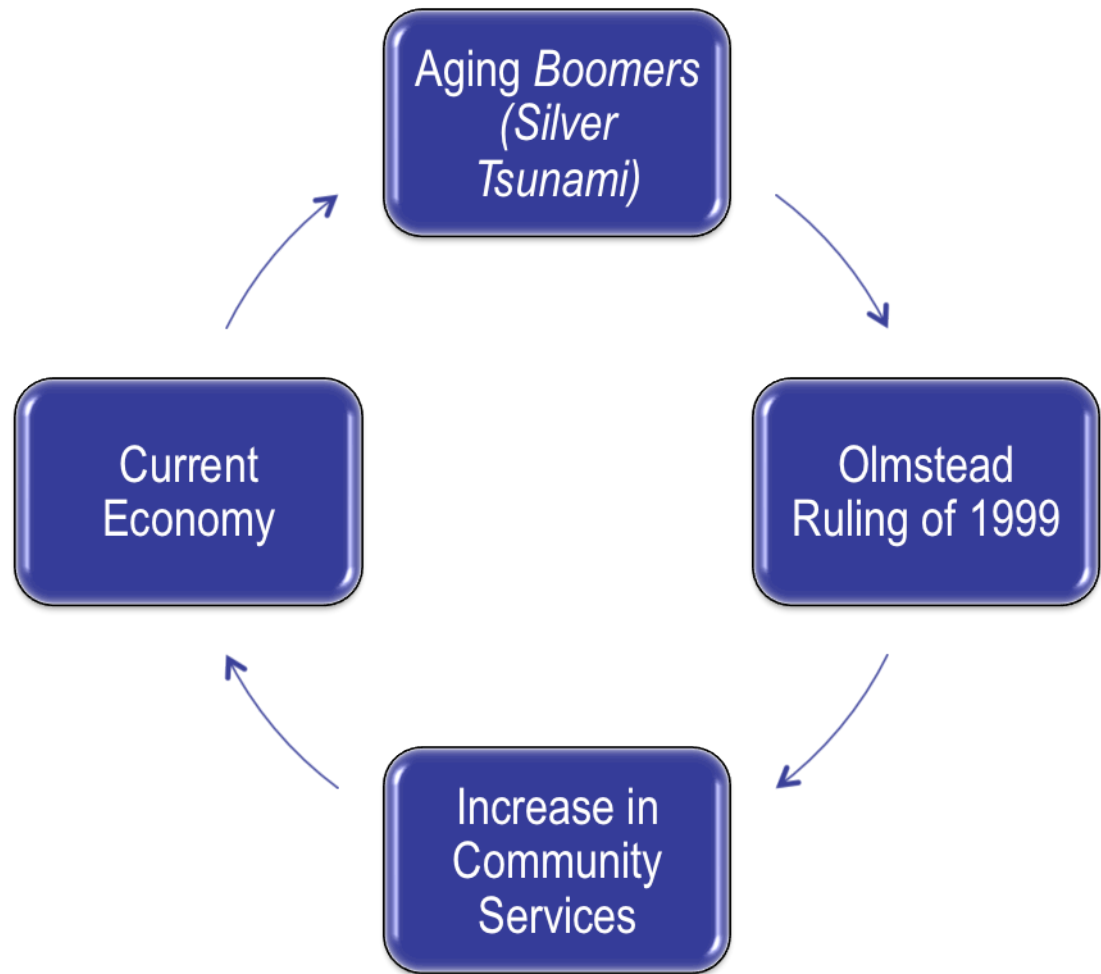
## *Mission*

Strengthen Georgia by providing Individuals and Families access to services that promote self-sufficiency, independence, and protect Georgia's vulnerable children and adults.

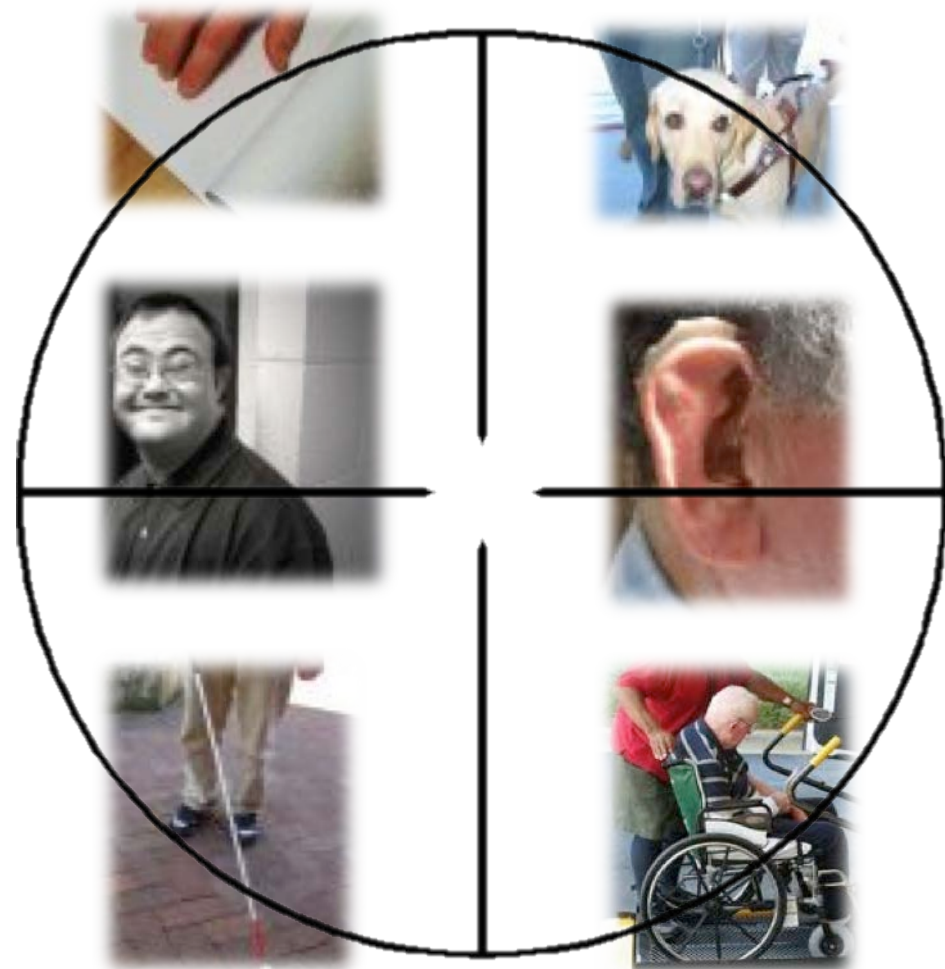
## *Core Values*

- Provide access to resources that offer support and empower Georgians and their families.
- Deliver services professionally and treat all clients with dignity and respect. Manage business operations effectively and efficiently by aligning resources across the agency.
- Promote accountability, transparency and quality in all services we deliver and programs we administer.
- Develop our employees at all levels of the agency.

# A Perfect Storm



# A Perfect Storm



Target-Rich  
Environment

# Did You KNOW?



## O.C.G.A. § 30-5-4

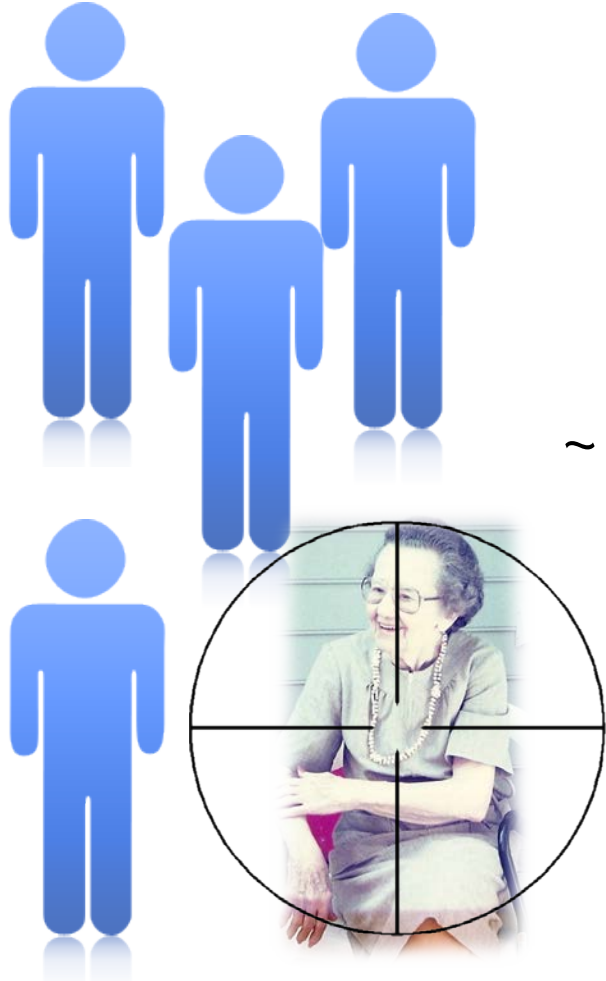
Requires Adult Protective Services to investigate reports of suspected abuse of:

- Individuals > 18 with any disability
- Individuals > 65

## Abuse of At-Risk Adults

US Census, 2010, Am. Community Survey 2010

# Did You KNOW?



~ 1 in 5 Georgians are At-Risk Adults

US Census, 2010, Am. Community Survey 2010



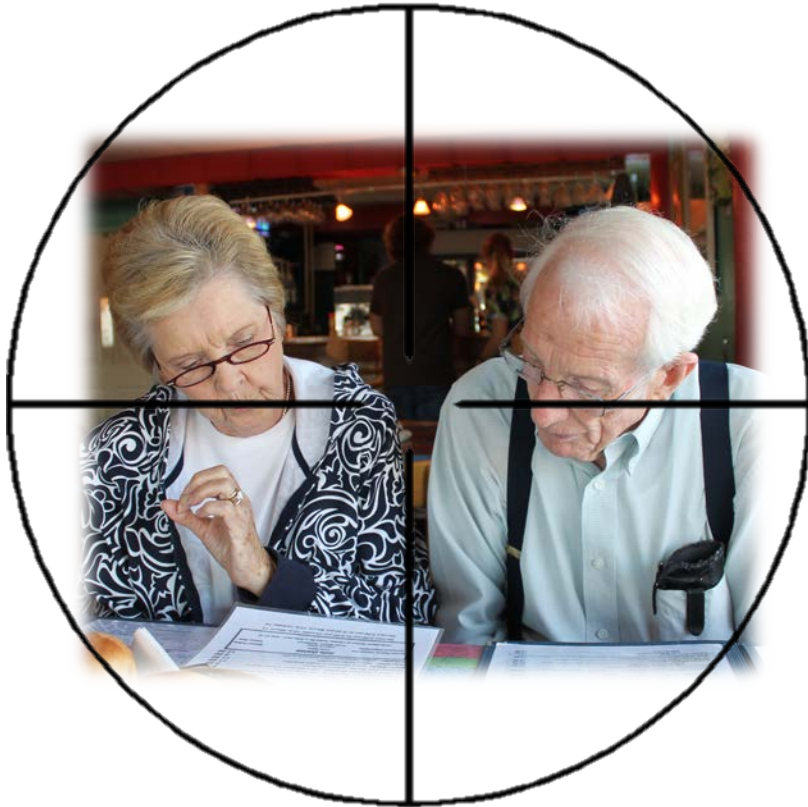
# Did You KNOW?



~ 1 in 6 adults over the age of 65  
have been victims  
of financial crime

Washington Post, September 15, 2012

# Did You KNOW?



Adults 65 and older  
Have net wealth  
  
~ 47x Greater  
  
than  
  
Adults 35 & under

Pew Research Center, 2011



# Did You KNOW?

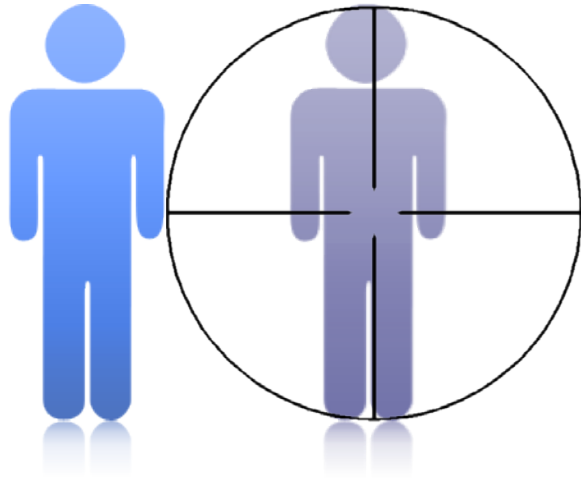


## The Top 3 Financial Exploitation problems:

- 1) Theft or diversion of funds or property by **family members**
- 2) Theft or diversion of funds or property by **caregivers**
- 3) Scams perpetrated by **strangers**.

Washington Post September 15, 2012

# Did You KNOW?



1 in 2 Adults with Alzheimer's  
will experience abuse, neglect,  
or exploitation.

M.T. Connolly in interview with USA Today. 11/10/11.

120,000 individuals > 65 with Alzheimer's in GA

Alzheimer's Association

# Did You KNOW?

**19,000**

The number of adults  
with disabilities  
living with caregivers > 65

GCDD Strategic Plan, 07/20/11

# Did You KNOW?



## 1 in 23

For every **one** case of elder abuse

coming to the attention of a responsible entity. . .

another **twenty three** cases never come to light.

Source: NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study; Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging; Lifespan; (2011)

# At-Risk Adult Crime Tactics (ACT)



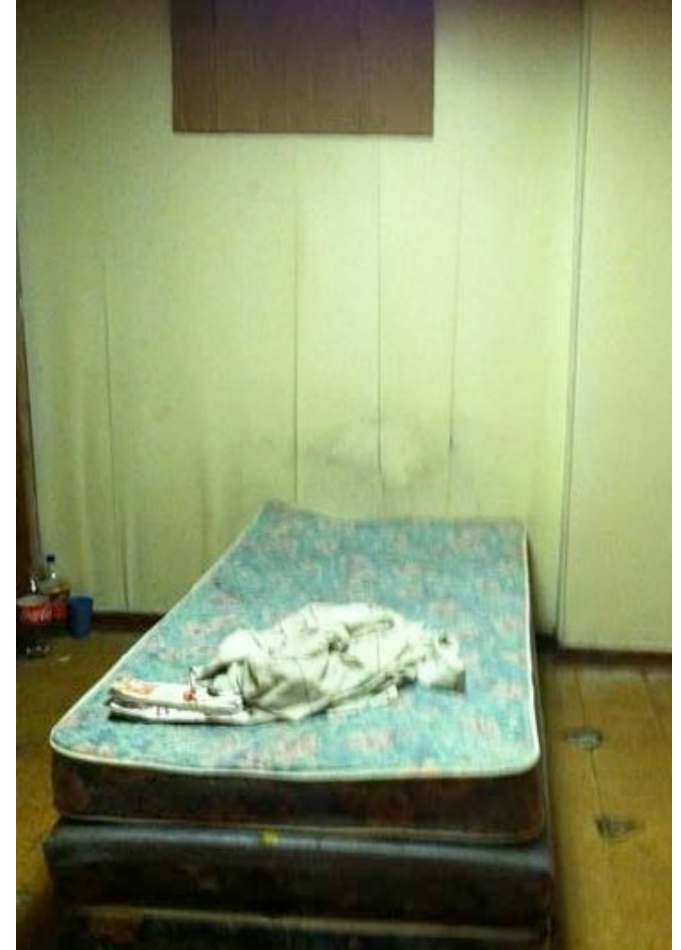
Launched in April 2011

- Two trainers
- 25 Courses in 12 Regions
- ~ 800 ACT Specialists

# Same Story, Different Locations

## “Boarders”

- Recruited from various locations
- Cognitive impairments, intellectual disabilities and mental illness
- Eligible for or receiving some type of benefits
- Required to turn over all assets





# Same Story, Different Locations

## **“Providers”**

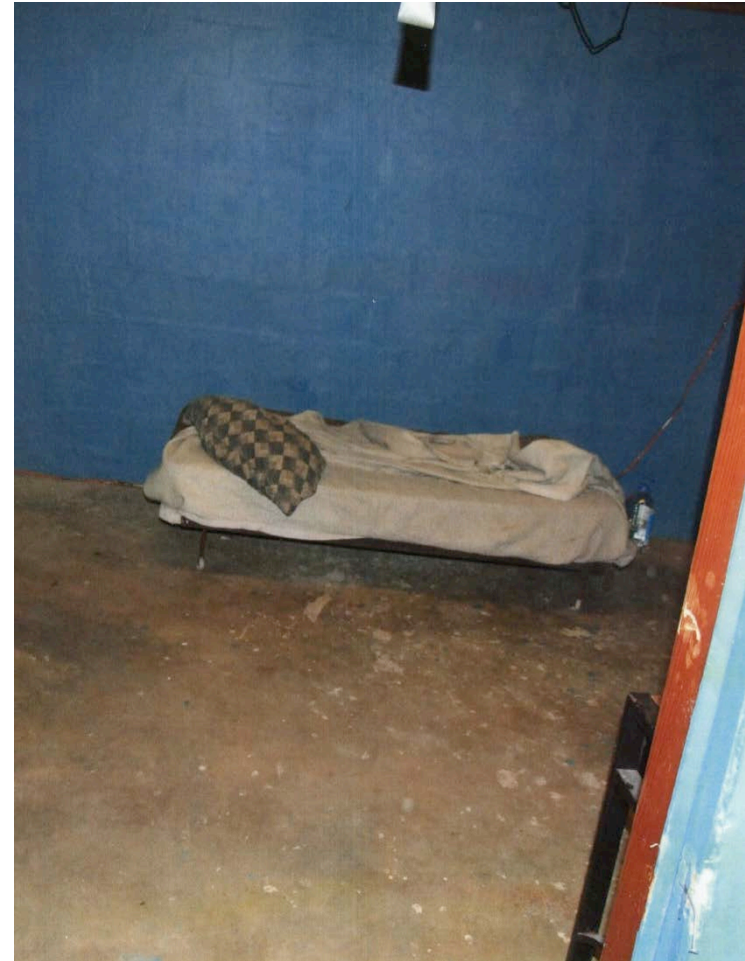
- Unlicensed entities
- Multiple properties
- Multi-jurisdictional
- Minimal, if any, services
- Scripting residents



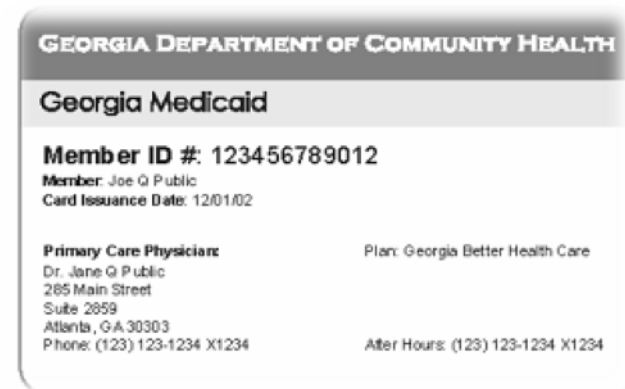
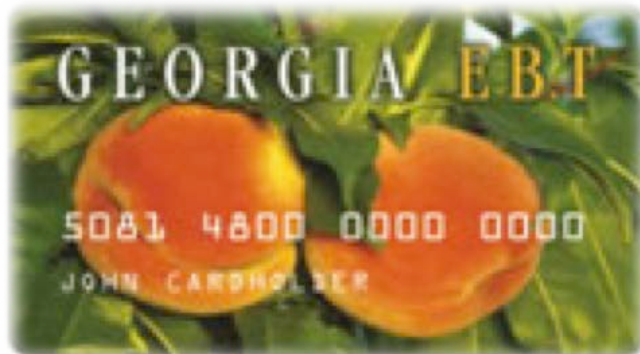
# Same Story, Different Locations

## Local Law Enforcement

- Frequent calls from residents
  - (no food, heat, meds)
- Frequent calls from owners/operators
  - (“make them take their meds,
  - take them somewhere, etc.”)
- Frequent calls from neighbors
  - (wandering neighborhood
  - begging for food, transportation, etc.)

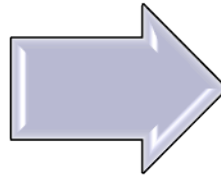


# Human Trafficking in Monthly Benefits



# Commodity

- An article of trade or commerce,
- A product not a service
- Something of use, advantage, or value



# HTMB

- At-Risk Adults
- Adults with Disabilities
- Older Adults
  - Eligible for or receiving monthly benefits

# Human Trafficking

## The Act

- **RECRUITMENT**
  - Shelters
  - Psych Hospitals
  - Hospitals
  - Churches
  - Facilities
  - Day Centers
  - On-line

## The Means

- **PROMISES**
  - benefits
  - services
  - Not delivered

## The Purpose

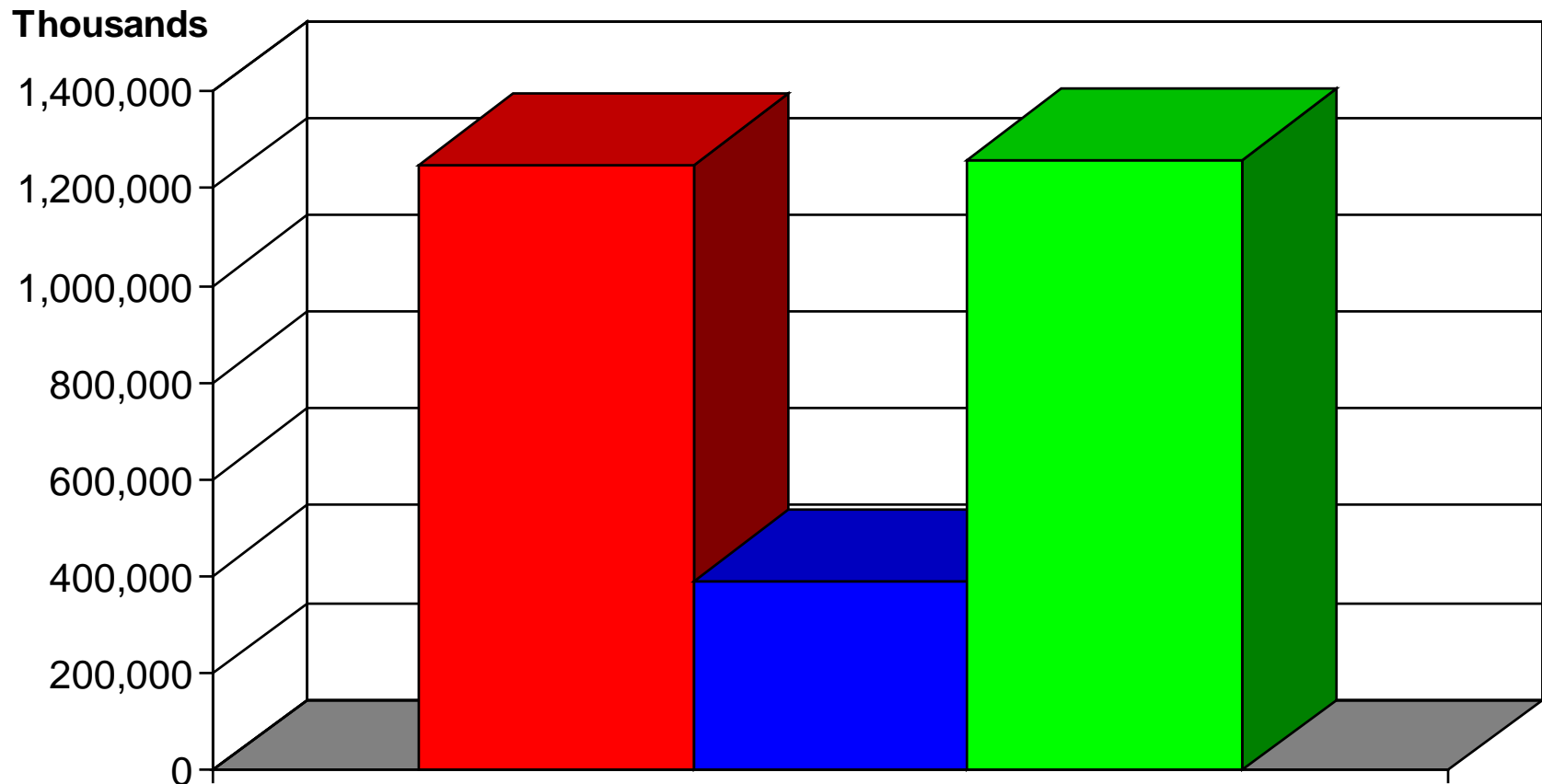
- **MONTHLY INCOME**
  - Food stamps,
  - Social Security
  - Supplemental Security
  - Medicaid
  - Vet's Benefits

# Findings

- **180 addresses across state (unlicensed homes)**
  - “Caregivers” become representative payees
  - Referrals from churches and hospitals
  - Residents required to turn over all benefits
  - Abuse & Neglect of residents
    - Restraints
    - Assaults
    - No Supervision
    - Inadequate food, heating, cooling
    - Utilities off
    - Utilities in residents’ name (without resident knowledge)
    - Horrendous living conditions

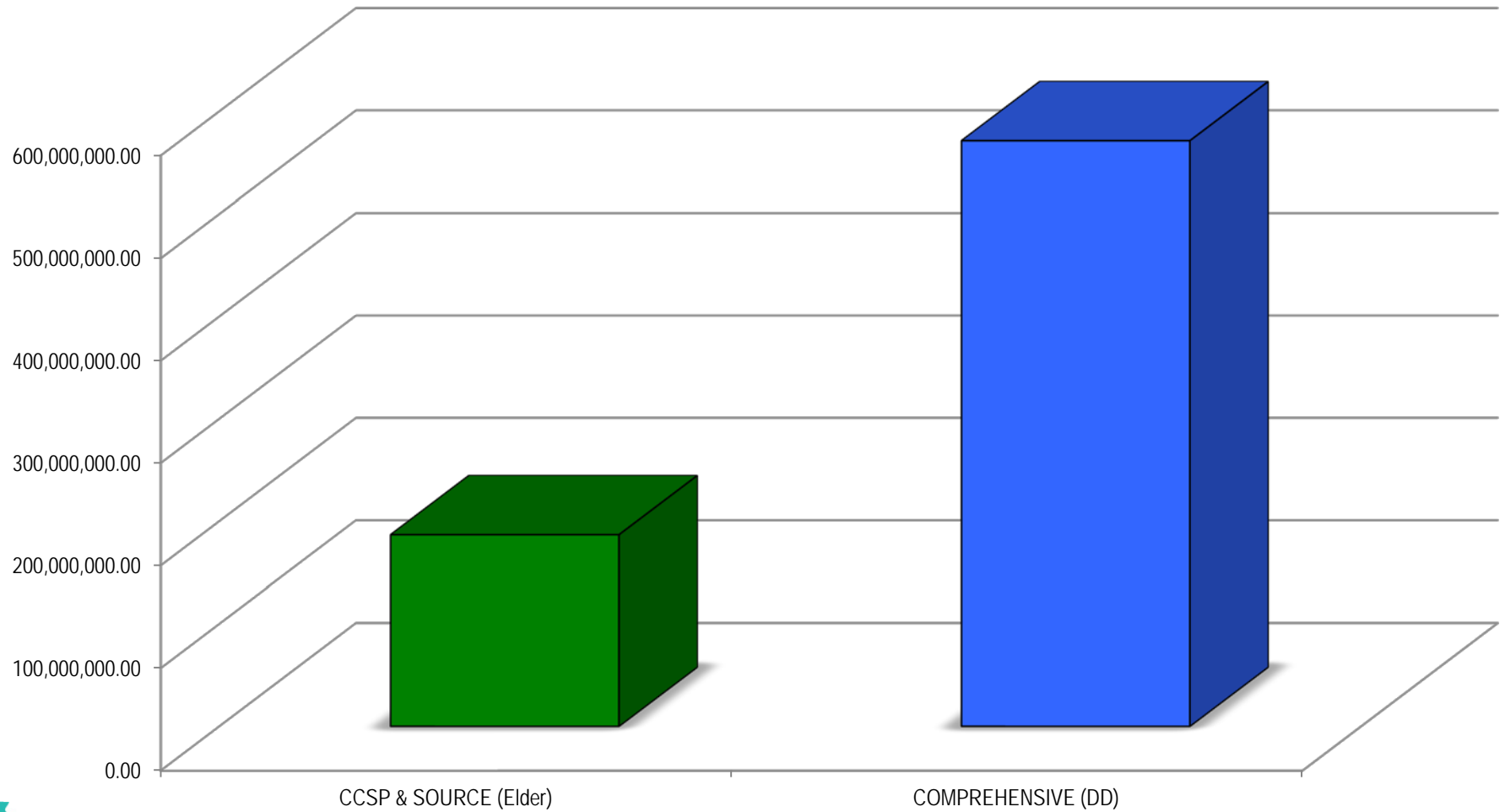


# Potential Earnings



■ Food Stamps ■ Medicaid ABD ■ Social Security

# Potential Earnings



# Current Response

- **Driven by funding stream / agency authority**
- **Referred from one agency to next**
- **Lacking coordination**
- **Lack of intelligence/data/information sharing**
- **While Residents:**
  - Moved frequently
  - Go without supervision and essential services
  - Suffer abuse, neglect & exploitation

# Getting GBI Director Keenan Involved

## Results (Ongoing):

- PSA with Governor Deal and Mr. Keenan
- Abuse, Neglect & Exploitation (ANE) Working Group created
- Local, State and Federal Agencies
- Obstacles identified
- Initiatives started
  - Roll Call Video production
  - Law Enforcement Protocol development
  - Prosecutor's Manual Update
  - Data sharing
- Networking

# Obstacles Identified by ANE Work Group

1. Emergency shelter
  - (Priority issue in 1993 Senate Elder Abuse Taskforce).
2. Lacking cabinet level entity to facilitate integrated approach
3. Training (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> responders, criminal justice)
4. Preservation of victims' testimony prior to trial.
5. Agency policies restricting data/information sharing between agencies
6. HIPAA often used as excuse not to provide information

# Obstacles Identified by ANE Work Group

7. Frequent moving of residents in unlicensed facilities
8. Lax pre-licensing background checks for personal care home owners
9. Obtaining financial records often difficult, untimely and expensive
10. PCHs owners licensed individually but may have multiple locations
11. Current GA law requires all mandated reporters to report to non-emergency responders



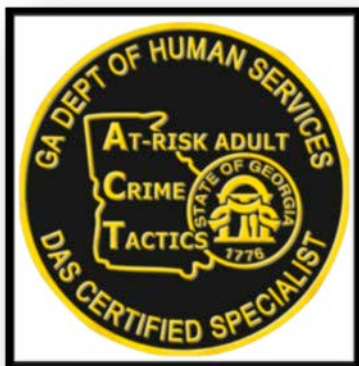
# Recommendations of ANE Work Group

1. Emergency shelter/housing (HFR rules/DCH waivers)
2. Cabinet level lead entity with authority to facilitate integration of system to improve response to abuse, neglect and exploitation of at-risk adults.
3. Training (public and professionals)
4. Reports to law enforcement immediately
5. Expedite investigation and prosecutions (before death &/or deterioration of cognition).

# Recommendations of ANE Work Group

5. Evidence preservation procedures should be developed and codified.
6. Statutory changes to provide law enforcement the ability to expeditiously and at low or no cost, obtain financial records related to abuse and exploitation.
7. Funding resources developed to support efforts to train, educate, and investigate related issues. (DCH/HFR civil penalties money)

# Questions?



## Contact Information:

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