



Georgia Department of Human Services
Division of Aging Services

Adult Protective Services and Public Guardianship Office

Program Enhancements and Data

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stronger families

FOR A STRONGER GEORGIA



Division Vision and Mission

Vision

Living longer, Living safely, Living well

Mission

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Aging Services (DAS) supports the larger goals of DHS by assisting older individuals, at-risk adults, persons with disabilities and their families and caregivers to achieve safe, healthy, independent and self-reliant lives.



Agenda

- Overview of Adult Protective Services Program Evaluation
- Program Enhancements Post Evaluation
- Guardianship Process
- Program Data



Adult Protective Services

- Agency mandated to investigate reports of abuse / neglect and exploitation
- Criteria:
 - 18+ with a disability or elderly 65+
 - Not residents of long term care facilities
 - Alleged maltreatment and unable to protect themselves
- Adult Protective Services (APS) are provided without regard to income or citizenship



Adult Protective Services (APS) Program Evaluation

- DAS began the process of internally evaluating the APS program in July 2017
 - Ensure APS policy addressed the latest trends and national recommendations
 - Review confidentiality law
 - Training
 - Outreach
 - Overall program review



NAPSA

- DHS contracted with the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) to evaluate and provide recommendations in the following program areas:
 - Policy
 - Training
 - Guiding Principles
 - Capacity Assessments



NAPSA Approach

- Detailed review of current Georgia laws, policy, trainings and guiding principles
- Held three listening sessions – two stakeholder sessions and one staff session
 - Stakeholder sessions included individuals from law enforcement, local Area Agencies on Aging and probate courts



NAPSA Recommendations

- NAPSA recognized Georgia has a solid APS program and our operations were within national standards of APS programs
- Policy Recommendation Highlights
 - Georgia's standards are more detailed than the national guidelines
 - Implement a statewide case review and quality assurance program
 - Notify the reporter the investigation is complete
 - Expand policies for completing capacity assessments
- Training Recommendations Highlights
 - More training around Mental Health in APS and among the elderly
 - Detail training on assessing client decision making capacity
 - Continue process of certification of all current APS staff



NAPSA Recommendations

- Georgia's guiding principles are in alignment with NAPSA's own Code of Ethics and the Administration for Community Living (ACL's) Nationally Recommended Standards
- APS added the following guiding principles:
 - Use family and informal support systems first
 - Honor the right of adults to receive information about their choices in a form or manner that they can understand
 - Maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries



NAPSA Legislative Recommendations

- Consider having every region or other appropriate geographic area to establish and maintain a multi-disciplinary team and provide guidelines for development and operation
- Permit program to notify reporter of investigation completion



What Has Happened Since?

- Strengthened APS policy by implementing policy enhancements
 - Quarterly case review audits
 - State level review on cases with multiple investigations
 - Strengthened policy and training on capacity assessments



What Has Happened Since?

- Completed training enhancements recommended by NAPSA
 - Georgia's current new worker training is already based on several modules from the national recommended training provide through NAPSA
 - Staff complete Mental Health First Aid training (MHFA) within 60 days of hire
 - Staff complete Adult Crime Tactics (ACT) training within 60 days of hire
 - APS staff required to complete the NAPSA certification program
 - Empowered staff through training to request for petitions for guardianship when there is a concern for capacity



What Has Happened Since?

- O.C.G.A. § 30-5-11
 - Created the option for each District Attorney (DA) to establish Multi Disciplinary Teams (MDT) in their District
 - Enabled APS to inform the reporter of case closure
- Ongoing mandated reporter education
 - What is Adult Protective Services ? What is our purpose? What are we able to do? What are our limitations?
 - Updated marketing materials



APS Certification Training

- Certification is offered through the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)
- Georgia is the first state to require all field staff, Supervisors and Managers complete certification

Requirements for certification:

- 2 years of APS field experience
- Completion of 24 training modules
 - Modules are based on the core competencies outlined in the Administration for Community Living's Voluntary Consensus Guidelines for State APS Systems
 - Each module contains knowledges checks that must be passed with 80% accuracy
 - New Hires must complete first 6 modules in the first 2 months of employment
 - Staff must complete 1 to 2 modules monthly
 - On target to have our first set of staff complete the certification by Jan 2020



Guardianship Process

- When a disabled adult or elder person in need of protection cannot remain protected due to an incapacity, a petition for the appointment of a guardian can be filed with a probate court
- There are 2 types of filing – a petition for guardianship and an emergency petition for guardianship
- During the course of an investigation, the Case Manager will complete the Checklist for Filing Guardianship along with a capacity assessment when considering the recommendation for appointment of a guardian to help guide them in their decision



Guardianship Process (Non-Emergency)

- Once the APS Investigator recommends appointment of a guardian
 - Within the 5 business days of recommendation:
 - Supervisor reviews request and makes face to face contact with the client to assess the situation
 - Case reviewed by APS District Manager
 - District Manager notifies APS State Office of petition request
 - A review with PGO Section Manager, DHS Associate General Counsel (AGC) for DAS, APS Section Manager and field staff is scheduled within 5 business days of the petition request



Guardianship Process (Non-Emergency)

- If decision is that a petition is needed:
 - DHS AGC will contact local Special Assistant Attorney General (SAAG)
 - Local staff to prepare case with SAAG in order to file petition
 - Once petition is filed, the court will start the process toward scheduling a hearing. Court ordered evaluations must be completed before the Notice of Hearing being can be issued
- If decision is not to file for guardianship:
 - All documents and notes from case review are submitted to DAS Director for review
 - DAS Director makes final determination regarding need to file petition



Guardianship Process (Emergency)

- If a client is in a life or death situation, APS can file for an Emergency Guardianship pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 29-4-14
- APS Process if there is a request for emergency guardianship includes:
 - District Manager reviews case and immediately notifies AGC to review case when a situation in need of emergency action is present
 - AGC reviews details and contacts local SAAG to begin the petition process
 - Once petition for emergency guardianship is filed, the emergency guardianship hearing is set by probate court within 3 to 5 business days of petition date
- If need for emergency guardianship is determined to not be needed
 - DAS Director reviews case and determines need for emergency guardianship



Guardianship Process Training

- All staff WebEx was completed in July 2017
 - Ensure all staff were aware of the process for petitioning for guardianship and emergency guardianships
- Process covered at September 2017 Managers and Supervisors trainings
 - Ensure new supervisors were aware of process and to empower staff to initiate guardianship process when capacity is in question
- Held additional all staff WebEx trainings in February 2018
 - Ensure all staff are informed of new process
 - Empower staff to use their trainings and direct knowledge of circumstances to guide them in recommending cases for appointment of guardianship
- Covered at all staff training in May 2018
- Reviewed at December 2018 Managers and Supervisors Training
- Training to be held twice yearly going forward



APS Program Data

APS:

- Active Investigations by SFY
 - SFY 16 – 17,772
 - SFY 17 – 19,675
 - SFY 18 – 21,222
 - SFY 19 to date (through February) – 17,241



PGO Program Data

Guardianships:

- DHS was appointed guardian
 - SFY16 – 137
 - 3 generated from APS (1 Emergency)
 - SFY17 – 138
 - 5 generated from APS (2 Emergency)
 - SFY18 – 141
 - 12 generated from APS (3 Emergency)
 - SFY 19 to date (through February) – 142
 - 8 generated from APS (2 Emergency)



Questions



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