



Behind closed doors . . . failure to protect.

“Washington’s system for responding to abuse and neglect of adults is currently failing to provide the protection that adults with disabilities need in order to live safely and with dignity.”

Findings by Disability Rights of Washington in

Improving Washington’s Response to Abuse & Neglect

April 2008

Effectiveness of Investigations

- Investigations of abuse and neglect are not thoroughly conducted and are compromised by staffing shortages and inadequate training for investigators.
- Washington’s Adult Protective Services (APS) substantiation rates for its investigators fall far below national substantiation rates. This raises concern that investigations are ineffective, resulting in continuing risk to victims of abuse and neglect.
- No State agency is holding non-licensed individuals civilly accountable for abusing or neglecting vulnerable adults receiving services from DSHS licensed providers.

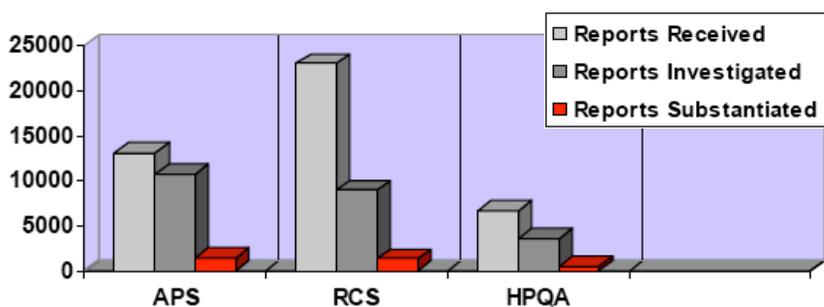
Protection of Victims

- Due to vague or inconsistent intake assessment standards, serious allegations of abuse and neglect may receive little or no response, leaving victims in danger of additional and more severe abuse or neglect.
- Washington does not hold mandatory reporters accountable for failure to report incidents of abuse and neglect as required under state law. Where abuse is witnessed but unreported by others, a climate of acceptance – and continuing abuse – is fostered.
- Protective measures and resources do not sufficiently reduce the risk of further harm to alleged victims during and after investigations.

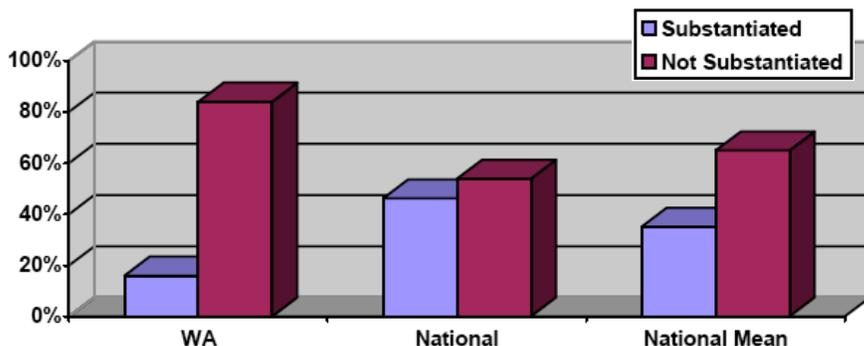
The failure of Washington to protect adults with disabilities is due to multiple problems within Washington’s abuse and neglect response system, which includes the divisions housed in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Health Professions Quality Assurance (HPQA) of the Department of Health.

Failure of Privatization Model for Delivery of Services to Vulnerable Citizens

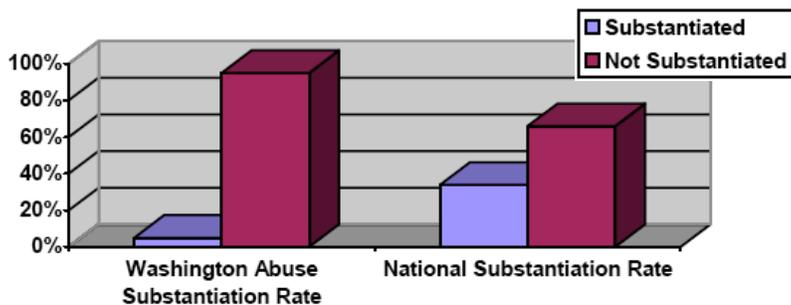
1 – Washington Substantiation Rates



2 – Washington and National Substantiation Rates



3 – Washington and National Abuse Substantiation Rates



APS' ABUSE REGISTRY

Adult Protective Services maintains an abuse registry of persons with an APS final finding of abuse, abandonment, neglect, or financial exploitation against a vulnerable adult. Persons with a final finding are disqualified from being a paid provider of Medicaid long-term care services.

To date, over 2000 (2052) names have been placed on the Abuse Registry.

In FY 2008, APS investigated 11,909 cases from July 2007 to June 2008 (10% increased compared to last fiscal year).

In October 2008, APS investigated 1,090 cases.

DRW recommends that RCS, APS, and HPQA immediately meet with DDD as well as HCS to clarify the role of RCS and determine how Washington can begin to better protect facility residents.

Disability Rights Washington (DRW) is a non-profit, federally-mandated organization designated by the Governor as the Protection and Advocacy system for the State of Washington. In this capacity, DRW advocates on behalf of individuals with disabilities by providing information and referral services and legal representation, by monitoring facilities that serve these individuals, by conducting investigations into alleged incidents of abuse or neglect, and by participating in various public policy and educational initiatives.