

SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

The Ohio Adult Protective Services law was enacted in 1981 and has been revised several times since its passage (Ohio Revised Code, 1996). The major landmark revisions were made in 1989, including allocating first time funds for writing administrative regulations and reporting. The fiscal responsibility for implementation of Adult Protective Services (APS) rests with the County Departments of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) with administrative oversight by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS). In addition, ODJFS has the responsibility for partial reimbursements to counties for APS. The County Departments of Job and Family Services serve the primary APS functions of investigating reports of elder abuse, determining the need for protective services, and providing the necessary services.

This is the first major research effort to be initiated at the state level to examine the service delivery system implemented in response to the enactment of the Adult Protective Services Legislation (Ohio Revised Code, 1996, Sections 5101.60-5101.71). The impetus for the research is the State's interest in exploring the performance and quality of the current APS program. Therefore, the College of Social Work at The Ohio State University was contracted by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to conduct a statewide comprehensive assessment of the current status of Adult Protective Services. The primary objective in conducting the evaluation was to examine the service delivery system utilized by the County Departments of Job and Family Services in the provision of APS and to estimate the related operation costs. This study was designed to gain insight into the implementation and management of the delivery of APS, including program administration, service structure, and service needs, as well as the

application and adequacy of APS law. The findings may be used to develop policies and strategies in the areas of program, budget, and service needs.

A comprehensive assessment of the service delivery structure, operation, cost analysis, and inter-organizational dynamics of delivering Adult Protective Services (APS) in Ohio was undertaken between April 2000 to June 2001. The specific aims of the project were:

- 1) to provide information on the APS structure, operation, and inter-organizational relationship between mandated agencies and other specific service providers through surveying the Departments of Job and Family Services staff and administrators in the 88 counties of Ohio;
- 2) to assist in decision-making for budget allocation for the APS system by undertaking a cost-analysis through assessment of current budget allocations, revenue sources, and expenditures obtained from CDJFS administrators in the 88 counties of Ohio and secondary data; and
- 3) to develop best practice models based on information on structure and operations utilized by other states and counties across the nation.

The assessment was conducted in three phases with Phase I and II dedicated to collecting information from multiple sources including all the APS staff, supervisors and administrators, and providers within the elder abuse network. The information obtained from the first two phases was utilized to make preliminary recommendations to all APS professionals, elder abuse network providers and the community at large during Phase III. The goal was to obtain feedback on the proposed recommendations made by the researcher and consultants, as well as develop priorities for implementation of the recommendations. A summary of the methodology used for gathering information in Phase I and II is presented, followed by a brief description of Phase III activities and organization of the final report.

Phase I: Summary

During Phase I, data was gathered from all 88 CDJFS - Adult Protective Services caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators in Ohio. Data was also gathered from staff who works with APS cases from all designated agencies. Designated agencies are organizations that have a contractual agreement with CDJFS to provide protective services.

A telephone survey was conducted to establish a contact person at the 88 County Departments of Job and Family Services and the designated agencies. Preliminary information on the profile of the county APS unit was gathered from the contact person. Questionnaires were developed and mailed to contact persons to distribute to caseworkers, supervisors, administrators, and designated agency staff.

— The caseworker survey was developed to gather information on demographics, job responsibilities, job satisfaction, case composition, service adequacy, perception of APS legislation and APS standards, relationship with community agencies, and suggestions and comments for improving the APS system. The questionnaires were self-administered and all caseworkers from the 88 counties were included as potential respondents.

— The supervisor survey elicited data in the areas of demographics, job responsibilities, APS unit activities, staffing issues, job satisfaction, relationship with workers, APS training and services, gaps and service needs, perception of APS law and agency standards, relationship with community agencies, and suggestions and comments for improving the APS system. The questionnaires were self-administered and all APS supervisors from the 88 counties were included as potential respondents.

— The administrator survey sought factual information about agency structure, staffing patterns, fiscal funding sources, revenues and expenditures, trends in funding, unit cost calculation, and opinions and suggestions about the APS system. Data was also gathered on demographics and agency background.

The questionnaires were self-administered and all the administrators from the 88 counties were included as potential respondents.

- The designated agency survey gathered data similar to that of the caseworker survey, including demographics, job responsibilities, APS unit activities, staffing issues, job satisfaction, relationship with workers, APS training, gaps and service needs, perception of APS law and agency standards, relationship with community agencies, and suggestions and comments for improving the APS system.

The questionnaires were self-administered and all designated agency staff members whose agency had a contract with the CDJFS were included as potential respondents.

- In addition, secondary data was obtained from the ~~A~~Protective Services for Adults~~@~~(ODHS 4287) quarterly reports which consist of a number of variables including client demographics, incident rates by type of maltreatment, age groups served, and types of cases.

Phase I Report Content

The findings from Phase I data collection of the >Evaluation of Ohio's Adult Protective Services: Structure, Operation, and Cost= are presented in a report that includes the following sections:

- **Section I discusses the introduction and basic background information.**
- **Section II covers the research methodology.**
- **Section III reviews the adult protective service delivery structure.**
- **Section IV covers the process and procedures utilized to deliver APS.**
- **Section V involves the cost calculation for delivery of APS.**
- **Section VI presents the findings from the designated agency surveys.**
- **Section VII presents the major findings and issues for policy, training, service delivery, and budget allocations.**
- **In addition to this report, a copy of a comprehensive comparative analysis of APS legislation and programs utilized by other states and counties across the nation is**

presented. In conjunction with the findings from all sources of primary data, this information was used to make recommendations to the State.

A report integrating the preliminary findings from the first stage of the APS research project was submitted to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in December 2000 (See Appendix F: Phase I - Summary of Major Findings).

Phase II: Summary

Having assembled an *internal* perspective of the Adult Protective Services System in Phase I, Phase II of the project moved to gather information from an *external* perspective, i.e., *community* service providers and key informants who interact with the APS system. Utilizing a series of focus groups conducted with community service providers in eight geographic regions, and telephone interviews with select key stakeholders, Phase II proposed to identify strengths and gaps in the operation, structure and funding mechanisms of the current APS system.

— Provider focus groups were conducted to assess the current functioning of the APS system. Professionals from community agencies (e.g., home health care agencies, Medicaid waiver providers, senior centers, hospitals, law enforcement agencies, local police departments, sheriff's offices, boards of mental retardation and developmentally disabled, and mental health agencies) that interact with mandated agencies were invited to participate in the focus groups. The participants were randomly selected from a listing of all potential providers in the 88 counties in Ohio. Eight regional focus groups were conducted using centralized locations to increase accessibility. In facilitated discussion, service providers submitted information regarding a variety of other dynamics that exist within the operation and administration of Adult Protective Services including availability of services, strengths and gaps of the current APS system, inter-agency communication, staff training, and funding. Each focus group also

examined specific issues of delivery system structure such as whether APS should be responsible for serving adults 18 and over versus serving elders 60 years and older, the roles of state versus county, and the best agency to oversee and administer the APS system. Finally, qualitative data was gathered on issues of funding availability and suggestions for improving the current APS system were made.

— The second mode of data collection utilized in Phase II of the research included interviewing key officials in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of state and local government and social service agencies for the purpose of gathering supplementary information and generating awareness regarding the existence and operation of the APS system. Key informants including probate court judges, county agency directors, county commissioners, local legislative representatives, state officials, and board members were interviewed using a structured questionnaire by trained interviewers. The key informants who participated in the telephone survey were selected randomly from a comprehensive listing of names of all the potential persons in each of the identified categories. These stakeholders were asked to bring their experience and insights as key decision-makers and overseers of the communities served by Adult Protective Services. Information was gathered from stakeholders on structure, operation and cost of the current APS system including awareness of APS issues, perception of responsiveness to APS issues at local and state levels, assessment of strengths and weaknesses of the APS system, and suggestions for allocation of resources. Interviews also served to both evaluate and promote awareness of the APS system among stakeholders.

Phase II: Report Content

The findings from Phase II data collection of the >Evaluation of Ohio=s Adult Protective Services: Structure, Operation, and Cost= are presented in a report that includes the following sections:

- _ Section I is an introduction to the report, including methodology and report organization.
- _ Section II explains data collection and sampling methods.
- _ Section III outlines the findings from the focus groups and includes an evaluation of inter-organizational relationships.
- _ Section IV includes the findings from the key stakeholder interviews.
- _ Section V presents a summary of the major findings from the Phase II data collection.

The findings from Phase II were used in conjunction with the Phase I findings to make final recommendations to the State. A report incorporating the findings from this stage of the APS research project was submitted to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in April 2001 (See Appendix F: Phase II - Summary of Major Findings).

Phase III: Community Forum

Phases I and II of the Adult Protective Services Research project provided significant data regarding the current state of the service delivery system in Ohio. Project staff, working with local and national consultants, carefully synthesized the data obtained from APS workers, community service providers, and key stakeholders to discern the greatest concerns and largest gaps in the APS system. The findings compiled were utilized to shape the preliminary recommendations for addressing the concerns in the structure, operation and funding mechanisms of the APS system.

Phase III of the project was designed to gain feedback from the greater community on the recommendations defined by the researcher and consultants. A Community Forum was scheduled

for June 14, 2001 in which Ohio residents who interact with the APS system (both as providers and recipients) were presented with research findings and preliminary recommendations.

Invitations were distributed in a mass mailing to all public and private sector providers within the elder abuse network and public officials who have oversight or a decision-making role within the APS system. The community forum was widely publicized through press releases to major media outlets throughout the state to inform the general public. Forum attendees were provided the opportunity to discuss the recommendations in small groups, submit written feedback, and finally prioritize the recommendations according to their own perceptions and experiences. Utilizing input from experts in the field, project staff developed best practice standards in an attempt to ease the implementation of the recommendations for areas governing the APS structure, operation, and cost. Feedback from Community Forum attendees and recommendations on best practices are integrated into this final report, submitted to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services in October of 2001.

Phase III: Report Content

The findings from Phase III data collection are presented in this report, and are organized by the following sections:

- _ Section I discusses the introduction and highlights the study background.
- _ Section II covers the research methodology for the community forum.
- _ Section III reviews the community forum findings along with comparative analysis from other sources of data.
- _ Section IV presents the recommendations integrating the feedback from >Community Forum= participants.
- _ Section V summarizes the findings and recommendations from Phase III.
- _ Section VI presents an anthology of >Best Practice Models= for implementing the recommendations in Section IV.