

Presentation to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Health and Human Services

Subcommittee on Aging February 12, 2018

Adult Protective Services





Mission:

To strengthen, with dignity and respect, the well-being and quality of life for all citizens through supportive services and advocacy.



Catawba County

- Western NC in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains
 - 60 miles NW of Charlotte
 - Largely known as a manufacturing/textile community
 - 405 square miles of both rural and urban areas
- Population of 157,000 citizens
 - Population of residents 60+ = 36,158 (23%)
 - More individuals 60+ than we do ages 0-17
 - Expected that our 60+ population will increase by 32% over the next 20 years
- We must plan for changes in our adult population!



Catawba County - APS

- Adult Protective Services (APS) isn't just for our older citizens
- APS serves any DISABLED adult who has been alleged to be abused, neglected, or exploited and is in need of protective services.
- All 100 County Departments of Social Services are mandated to receive APS reports.
 - The reports are screened to determine if they meet criteria under the APS law and if so, the report is screened in and assigned to a social worker who visits the home and completes an evaluation of the situation.
 - The response time to make the initial visit to the home is based on the seriousness of the report but no longer than 72 hours.



Catawba County - APS

What if the report DOES NOT meet the criteria established under the APS law?

- The report is screened out.

HOWEVER:

In Catawba County we work to provide assistance to individuals in screened out reports by way of INFORMATION & REFERRAL and/or OUTREACH visits by our SW – it's BEST PRACTICE and often BEST for our citizens even though it is NOT required.

- Outreach visit can result in APS services



Catawba County – APS by the Numbers

- From FY 2012 to FY 2017 the number of APS reports increased by 63.5%
 - First 6 months of FY 2017 compared to first 6 months of FY 2018 we've seen another increase in number of reports by 53%
- From July 2017 through December 2017 a total of 105 reports were screened IN and 155 reports were screened OUT.
 - 40/105 screened in reports determined that abuse, neglect or exploitation occurred (38%)
 - 108 out of 155 of the screened out reports were provided I&R and/or an outreach visit by a social worker (70%)



Catawba County – APS by the Numbers

The largest proportion of our APS reports allege SELF-NEGLECT.

- For the first 6 months of the current FY in cases where we determined abuse, neglect, or exploitation had occurred:
 - 55% were SELF-NEGLECT
 - 23% were CARETAKER-NEGLECT
 - 20% were EXPLOITATION
 - 2% were ABUSE



Catawba County – APS by the Numbers

Significant increase in the number *and complexity* of reports all the while seeing a reduction in funding for APS Services (23% reduction)



Catawba County – APS Considerations

The DIFFERENCE between Adult Protective versus Child Protective Services:

- Right to Self-Determination – I have the right to allow someone to spend all my money even though I may go without things I need.
- Another consideration: Is there someone who is responsible who is able AND willing to assist the adult?
 - Sometimes we find someone who is responsible and able but NOT willing!



Catawba County

Mary's Story



Catawba County – APS Challenges

- Doing MORE with LESS – many of our APS clients are in need of services/resources
 - Ex. In FY 12, our APS funding was \$39,396 – not even enough to fund ONE position at the minimum salary for a PSSW (\$44,332 w/out benefits)
 - Current funding is \$30,462
- Lack of IN-HOME resources – facility placement is COSTLY!
- More complex cases involving younger clients with mental illnesses and/or substance use disorder
- Individuals with a lack of informal supports (family and friends to help)
- Avoiding “Band-Aid” approach to serving
- Serving individuals with “capacity” to care for self but lacking the physical ability or “will” to care for self



Catawba County – APS Successes

Increased participation and involvement at the Law Enforcement and DA level in willingness to prosecute perpetrators.

(When was the last time you saw a headline about elder abuse as opposed to child abuse?)



Catawba County – For Consideration

- *APS Laws need to be updated to better fit the population we are now serving*
- *Envision APS Law that is PROACTIVE rather than REACTIVE*
- *Include OUTREACH services and increase funding for basic APS services*



Catawba County – Possible Solutions

- *Pursue grant funding to supplement funding*
- *Educate the community about APS*
- *Better marketing as a whole to educate community about vulnerable adult population and needed community support/assistance needs*
- *Possible program like NC Health Choice for disabled adults who fall in the gap of having too much income for Medicaid but still can't afford other types of insurance*



Catawba County – Thank YOU

Our privilege to come before this committee and share our Catawba County experience. It mirrors MANY other counties!

“To care for those who once cared for us is one of the highest honors.”

