

A report of the
Department of Social Services
Commonwealth of Virginia

**Report on the Response of the
Department of Social Services
to the Impact of the Aging of
Virginia's Population**

to the Governor and the
General Assembly of Virginia

November 2007



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
Office of the Commissioner

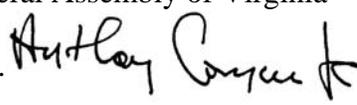
Anthony Conyers, Jr.
COMMISSIONER

November 15, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Timothy M. Kaine
Governor of Virginia

Members of the General Assembly of Virginia

FROM: Anthony Conyers, Jr. 

SUBJECT: Addressing the Impact of the Aging on Virginia's Polulation

Pursuant to legislation enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia, the Virginia Department of Social Services submits this report of its progress in addressing the impact of the aging of Virginia's population.

AC/lrm

Executive Summary

...the extent of the impact [of an aging population] will ultimately be determined by State policy-makers. This is because in most cases, increases in service provision are not inevitable, but instead rest upon policy choices about the role of the State in ensuring a minimum safety net, and what minimum quality of life for older Virginians is considered to be desirable, necessary, or affordable.

-- Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission report, "The Impact of an Aging Population on State Agencies," 2006.

Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) programs serving Virginians age 60 and older are the "minimum safety net" for the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable among the Commonwealth's older citizens. With the arrival of the first wave of "Baby Boomers" in that age group, demand is rising for virtually all VDSS services and supports for older Virginians and will continue to do so. In many programs, however, resources already are inadequate to meet demand.

A variety of factors, including federal policy, social and demographic pressures and the availability of health care, affect both demand and resources. This assessment of the impact of an aging population on VDSS services in fiscal year (FY) 2007 revealed a number of concerns:

Services

- *A de facto* rationing of home-based services needed to delay or avoid placements in costly and restrictive long-term care facilities has resulted from limited state and local Adult Services funding.
- Significant Adult Protective Services and Licensing issues are arising from the growing number of elderly mentally ill individuals and former correctional facility inmates being placed in assisted living or nursing facilities.
- Limited state funding is available to assist local departments of social services with the administrative costs of expanding their APS staffs to meet new demands from significant growth in their elderly populations and APS caseloads.
- Auxiliary Grant (AG) reimbursement rates do not cover the actual cost of providing a minimum standard of living for residents of assisted living facilities, which threatens to reduce the already limited number that accept AG recipients.

Workforce

- VDSS faces an impending loss of program staff, leadership and institutional knowledge as growing numbers of state and local social services employees reach retirement age.
- Budget constraints have caused reductions in the number and availability of training courses for local eligibility and social workers who provide services to older Virginians.

To address concerns involving the impact of an aging population on VDSS services and workforce, VDSS makes the following recommendations:

- In 2008, VDSS will host a system-wide review of programs and services provided to adults. Participants will include local, regional and state-level managers, supervisors and front-line staff. They will assess current information on unmet service demand, waiting lists, gaps and innovations. Participants will develop and endorse a prioritized list of action steps to address the identified needs and recommend innovations for implementation.
- Together with local departments of social services, VDSS will standardize data collection and management reporting pertaining to waiting lists and service plans for adult services, including protective services and home-based services. State, regional and local staff will use a monthly report generated from the Adult Services/Adult Protective Services automated system (ASAPS) to focus on timeliness of investigations as a management tool for monitoring the safety of elderly and incapacitated consumers.
- VDSS will continue to monitor workforce aging and retirement trends and to implement appropriate succession planning and leadership development strategies.

Report on the Response of the Department of Social Services to the Impact of the Aging of Virginia's Population

Agency Description

Mission Statement:

People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families, and communities.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) envisions a Commonwealth in which individuals and families have access to adequate, affordable, high quality human/social services that enable them to be the best they can.

VDSS touches the lives of one in three Virginians (approximately 2.5 million individuals) and more than 112,000 businesses each year. VDSS and its system partners – local departments of social services and community action agencies – provide many of the Commonwealth's most critical services, including the collection of child support, licensing of adult and child care facilities, social safety net programs, subsidized child care, protection of children and adults from abuse and neglect and workforce development services.

In addition to the important individual and family benefits derived from these services, VDSS also makes important contributions to the economy. Each year, child support collections exceed \$560 million; food stamp benefits (100 percent federal funds) spent in Virginia grocery stores exceed \$486 million; and more than 10,000 public assistance recipients exit their programs for employment, becoming valuable, contributing members of Virginia's competitive workforce and contributing to Virginia's tax base.

VDSS values include:

- Accountability -- We maintain an organization and network that are both effective and good stewards of public funds and trust.
- Integrity -- Our individual and group actions demonstrate the highest ethical and professional standards and respect for our customers.
- Effectiveness -- We strive to maximize our resources and effectively meet the changing needs of our customers.
- Innovation -- As a learning organization we encourage the development of innovative ways of doing business.
- Excellent Customer Service -- Our customers are accustomed to prompt responses, accurate information and compassionate attention to their concerns.

- Diversity -- We recognize and appreciate the diversity of both our employees and our customers.

Introduction

The Virginia Social Services System is the safety net for the poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable among the Commonwealth's older citizens. The impact of an aging population is having and will continue to have a significant impact on the demand for Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) services and benefits.

The 2006 report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission, *The Impact of an Aging Population on State Agencies*, summarized the dilemma facing the Commonwealth:

“...the extent of the impact will ultimately be determined by State policy-makers. This is because in most cases, increases in service provision are not inevitable, but instead rest upon policy choices about the role of the State in ensuring a minimum safety net, and what minimum quality of life for older Virginians is considered to be desirable, necessary, or affordable.”

The number of Virginians age 60 or older will grow from the present 15 % to 24 % in 2030, when nearly one in every four Virginians will be over 60 – an increase of 60 % or 1.3 million persons. Services required by this population will be more complex and costly not only because of their numbers but because a larger and larger segment will be the “old old” – age 80 and older – and have more acute incapacities and health care needs.

Another significant factor is the movement toward community integration of adults who have significant physical, developmental and mental health disabilities and whose life expectancies have been extended by modern health care. The aging and death of significant numbers of Baby Boomer parents of adult children who are incapacitated and who will require services when parents can no longer care for them also will be a contributing factor.

The number of older Virginians needing public assistance, protective services, home-and community-based services and long-term care placements will continue to rise. VDSS will continue to seek the least restrictive living environment for older adults and to foster self-sufficiency, avoid inappropriate or premature institutionalization, ensure high standards for assisted living and community-based care and to protect our elders from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Services to Older Virginians

In Virginia, social services are state supervised and locally administered through 120 local departments of social services. Many seniors receive services from multiple programs with different funding streams, eligibility criteria, age ranges and data collection requirements. Because of this diversity, information on the number of older persons receiving services is provided by VDSS division rather than a total number served.

Unmet Demand

Severe cuts were made in the number and frequency of training courses available through the Virginia Institute for Social Services Training (VISSTA) because of budget restraints are having a significant impact on the ability of local Adult Services, Benefits and other workers to provide the best possible services to Virginians age 60 and older.

Benefit Programs

Applicants for the federal Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamp (FS) programs receive eligibility and enrollment services through local departments of social services with supervision by the Division of Benefit Programs.

Unmet Demand

Demand for Medicaid, Food Stamps, TANF other public assistance programs will continue to grow as Virginia's population ages, health care costs rise and retiree health benefits are reduced or eliminated.

Medicaid

VDSS Benefit Programs and Information Technology staffs are working closely with agency partners to develop an automated universal application for Medicaid as part of the Secretary's No Wrong Door initiative.

In FY 2007, a total of 129,193 older Virginians were enrolled in Medicaid, including 711 being treated at state and local mental health hospitals, a significant increase over FY 2006, when 127,422 seniors were enrolled in Medicaid, including 786 in state and local mental health hospitals.

Medicaid Enrollees		
Age	FY 2006	FY 2007
60-64	20,931	21,945
65-74	45,728	46,296
75-84	39,400	39,296
85 +	21,363	21,656
Total	127,422	129,193

TANF and Food Stamps

In FY 2007, a total of 116 TANF recipients and 64,594 Food Stamp recipients were age 60 and older, compared to 118 TANF and 60,814 Food Stamp recipients in FY 2006.

TANF Recipients		
Age	2007	2006
60-64	90	90
65-74	19	15
75-84	1	1
85 plus	6	12
Food Stamp Recipients		
Age	2007	2006
60-64	17,743	16,862
65-74	25,522	24,023
75-84	16,145	15,279
85 plus	5,184	4,650
Note: Unduplicated count of recipients whose needs are included in the TANF grant or FS allotment.		

Energy Assistance

Number of Households* Receiving Energy Assistance			
	Fuel Assistance	Crisis Assistance	Cooling Assistance
2007	39,192	4,219	15,160
2006	40,689	4,085	13,167
2005	36,002	3,654	10,443

*Households with at least one person who is age 60 or older

Child Support Enforcement (CSE)

Program participants include custodians, obligors and “children.” In September 2007, a total of 3,040 participants were 65 and older. In September 2006, the total was 3,000.

Unmet Demand

As the Commonwealth’s population continues to age, there will be an impact on the participation of older individuals. However, other social and demographic factors also will play a part. For example, the total number of grandparent participants decreased by one-half percent from September 2006 to September 2007, while the percentage of grandmothers increased from 91.7 % to 92.7 %.

Community and Volunteer Services

Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)

In FY 2007, CSBG-supported program participants included 9,757 age 55 to 69 and 8,084 age 70 and older.

Office of Community and Volunteer Services

In 2006, Virginia had the fifth-highest rate of Baby Boomer volunteers and the sixth-highest median number of Baby Boomer volunteer hours (60) in the nation.

Family Services

Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (AS/APS)

AS/APS programs are mandated to serve adults ages 60 and older and adults ages 18 to 59 who are incapacitated. Programs include Adult Services, Adult Protective Services, Auxiliary Grant and Caregivers Grant. Local AS/APS workers provide case management services to older Virginians, a collaborative process that assesses, plans, implements, coordinates, monitors, and evaluates the options and services required to meet the individual's health and human service needs.

Enhancements to the Adult Services/Adult Protective Services (ASAPS) automated case management and reporting system were completed in FY 2007. These projects included collaborating with the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS) to produce APS data to meet federal reporting requirements on the safety of Medicaid waiver recipients.

Adult Services program and the ASAPS technical support team also are working with DMAS to develop a system for electronic submission of long-term care preadmission screening documents, including the Uniform Assessment Instrument.

VDSS Adult Services/APS staff participated in more than a dozen interagency workgroups and leadership teams for the federal Systems Transformation Grant and Money Follows the Person Demonstration, including groups involved in the No Wrong Door project and the development of an interagency critical incident reporting system. These initiatives are aimed at assisting older Virginians and adults with physical or intellectual disabilities to move from long-term care facilities to community living and to manage their own services and benefits.

Unmet Demand

Between FY 2005 and 2007, APS reports involving elderly victims rose 10.6 %, from 8,791 to 9,721. Especially alarming was the increase in reports involving elders age 86 and older – the fastest growing segment of the aging population.

At the same time, the cost of providing services to stop or prevent elder abuse and neglect are rising and resources to pay for those services are not keeping up with demand. For example, funds were not available to address significant increases in the federal minimum wage, which most home-based services providers charge. As a result, many local departments have been forced to cut service hours for existing clients and are unable to provide services to those on their waiting lists.

The result is a de facto rationing of protective services -- especially home-based care -- to Virginia's most vulnerable elderly.

Adult Protective Services (APS)

Adult Protective Services for older Virginians include the investigation of reports of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation and service interventions to stop the abuse and prevent its recurrence or to address the risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Self-neglect accounts for over 40 % of the APS caseload. The elderly also face significant risk of passive neglect when a caregiver is overwhelmed or also a frail elder. Home-based companion, chore and homemaker services are critical tools for addressing and preventing elder neglect.

In FY 2007, APS received 9,721 reports of suspected abuse and neglect of an elderly person, compared to 9,646 in FY 2006. (includes Hotline reports)

FY 2007 APS Reports	
Age of Report Subject	Number of Reports
61-65	1,158
66-75	2,484
76-85	3,708
86+	2,371

FY 2006 APS Reports	
Age of Report Subject	Number of Reports
61-65	1,085
66-75	2,474
76-85	3,633
86+	2,454

APS Hotline

In FY 2007, the APS Hotline (1-888-83-ADULT) received 1,040 calls involving suspected adult abuse, neglect or exploitation and made four direct reports to local law enforcement agencies, pursuant to HB 1351 (2006). In the fourth quarter of FY 2006, the Hotline received 265 APS calls. (The APS Hotline census was implemented in April 2006.)

Adult Services

Home-based services such as companion, chore and homemaker services are a key element in ending or preventing elder neglect and self-neglect and in assisting older persons to remain at home as long as possible and avoid or delay placement in a long-term care facility.

In FY 2007, a total of 12,267 adults age 60 and over received adult services, including home-based services.

Number of Adults Receiving Services from the Adult Services Program	
Age Range	Number Served
60-64	1,259
65-74	3,002

75-84	4,528
85+	3,478

Virginia Auxiliary Grant Program

The Auxiliary Grant (AG) is a monthly state supplement to Social Security disability benefits for poor aged or incapacitated adults residing in assisted living facilities (ALF) or adult foster care homes. The reimbursement rate is set by the General Assembly and is comprised of 80 % General Funds and a 20 % local match. The current AG rate is \$1,061 per month, with a 15 % differential for Northern Virginia localities (Planning District 8).

The number of ALF beds available to AG recipients continues to decline with the growing disparity between AG and private-pay rates and a significant increase in the number of frail elderly and others with significant health care needs, especially mental health needs. Some 65 % of ALF residents are mental health consumers.

Because Auxiliary Grant case counts fluctuate daily, the standard measurement is average monthly caseload.

Auxiliary Grant Average Monthly Caseload		
Age	FY 2007	FY2006
62-64	489	474
65-74	1,596	1,576
75-84	1,640	1,656
85+	1,567	1,446

Virginia Caregivers Grant Program

The Caregivers Grant Program was created by the General Assembly to recognize and reward those who care for an elderly or incapacitated relative at home through an annual grant of up to \$500. In calendar 2007, a total of 564 caregivers age 60 and older received a \$500 grant, and 862 individuals age 60 and older were the recipients of care. In calendar 2006, a total of 517 caregivers age 60 and over were approved for grants, and 842 persons age 60 and older were recipients of care.

Virginia Caregivers Grant Program				
FY 2007 Age of Caregiver				
Age	60-69	70-79	80-90	90 +
Number of People	290	215	54	5
FY 2007 Age of Care Recipient				
Age	60-69	70-79	80-90	90 +
Number of People	169	281	298	114
FY 2006 Age of Caregiver				
Age	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Number of People	275	170	68	4
FY 2006 Age of Care Recipient				
Age	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
Number of People	146	268	299	129

Unmet Demand

Caregivers Grant funds are appropriated annually by the General Assembly. In four of the seven years since the program's inception, funding was severely limited or eliminated. Grant funds are pro-rated among approved applicants, and only in three grant cycles has the program been able to give caregivers the maximum \$500 grant. Program funds are restricted to grant payments, and administrative costs including staff time, materials and mailing expenses are borne by the Adult Services program.

Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence receive safe shelter, support group and counseling services through community-based programs supported by VDSS grant funds. In FY 2007, a total of 72 victims age 64 and older received services compared to 50 in FY 2006, 55 in FY 2005, and 37 in FY 2002 (Excludes Hotline calls).

Human Resource Management (HR)

In 2007, HR processed 249 job applications from persons age 60 and older, compared to 110 in 2006. Services provided to VDSS employees age 60 and older included hiring, rehiring and retirement transactions.

2007 Human Resources		
Age	Hire/Rehire	Retirement
60-64	4	7
65-74	0	7

2006 Human Resources		
Age	Hire/Rehire	Retirement
60-64	3	6
65-74	1	4

Licensing Programs

On July 1, 2007, there were 31,824 beds in 579 licensed assisted living facilities (ALF) and a service capacity 2,520 in 70 licensed adult day centers. On July 1, 2006, the totals were 32,446 beds in 596 licensed ALFs and 68 licensed adult day centers with a total capacity of 2,467.

Unmet Demand

The growing mental health population and the increasing number of elderly parolees who are being released into assisted living facilities are a significant concern. Many of these residents are difficult to serve because of aggressive behaviors, refusal to take prescribed medications, repeated episodes of acting out or a need for services that the facility is unable or unwilling to provide.

Specialized Services for Elders

VDSS programs serve children, families and older Virginians across the age spectrum. AS/APS provides specific services to adults age 60 and older to end abuse, neglect or exploitation and prevent its recurrence. Services and supports are available in the following categories.

Health Care

AS/APS services include assessments of health care needs such as nursing facility pre-admission screenings and needs assessments for services in an assisted living facility, adult foster care home or home-based care. Protective services provided to victims of elder abuse include placements and retention in a nursing or assisted living facility or a Medicaid waiver and arranging for medical, psychiatric or other outpatient care.

Education

AS/APS distributes and posts on the VDSS website a variety of educational materials and offers presentations on topics such as recognizing the signs of elder abuse, neglect or financial exploitation and the responsibilities of mandated reporters. Audiences include senior citizen and other community groups, local social services and partner agencies, advocacy and professional organizations and the general public.

AS/APS staff members participated in interagency teams developing statewide educational campaigns on long-term care insurance (the Governor's "Own Your Future" campaign) and the danger of alcohol abuse among seniors.

AS/APS conducts an annual public awareness campaign during Elder Abuse Awareness Month each May. "May Packet" materials are posted on the VDSS website and are distributed to 120 local social services departments, area agencies on aging and other organizations serving older Virginians. Packets include a proclamation from the governor; sample news releases and op-ed articles; easily reproduced educational materials; and donated senior-friendly novelty items such as jar lid openers with the APS Hotline number

The Domestic Violence Program (DV) conducts a similar campaign during October Family Violence Prevention Month, using professionally designed posters and other materials obtained from national DV organizations. DV also publishes a monthly newsletter for local DV programs, partner agencies and stakeholders.

The Family and Children's Trust Fund (FACT) developed and distributes a half-hour video/DVD called, *Protecting Adults at Risk: A Mandated Reporters Guide to Recognizing and Reporting Suspected Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation*. FACT also distributed \$350,000 in grants to address family violence, including elder abuse.

Public Safety

APS investigated almost 12,000 reports of suspected elder abuse, neglect or exploitation in FY 2007. If a need for protective services is found and the victim accepts, APS develops a service plan to end the abuse and prevent its recurrence. APS collaborates with law enforcement, medical examiners and other public safety officers and petitions the court for appointment of a guardian or conservator if needed. APS workers also assist prosecutors in criminal proceedings as appropriate

Local AS/APS workers review the required annual reports filed by legal guardians and take appropriate action to ensure the protection of the incapacitated person.

Financial Security

Auxiliary Grant and other benefit programs include specific recipient categories for "aged" individuals or persons age 60 and older. Financial exploitation is a serious and growing threat to older Virginians, accounting for about 10 % of APS reports. Local APS workers investigate financial exploitation reports and if they are substantiated, take appropriate steps and provide services to end the exploitation and prevent its recurrence. Services may include temporary or emergency housing.

Transportation

Adult Services provides transportation for senior citizens to access needed services including relocating abuse victims, obtaining health and mental health treatment and attending day programs.

Consumer-Oriented and Senior Friendly Information Services

In FY 2007, the Division of Public Affairs made significant progress in the redesign, update and expansion of VDSS internal and external communication media. Particular emphasis was given to accessibility, user-friendliness and outreach to all Department audiences:

consumers of all ages and their families; state and local employees; partner agencies; service providers; community and advocacy groups and the media.

Public Affairs specialists worked closely with VDSS Adult Services staff to improve AS/APS Web pages and content, develop new brochures and program materials and attract media coverage of elder abuse issues.

Web/Internet

The VDSS public Web site is senior friendly. Services for adults are listed at the top of the Home Page menu. From there, seniors can easily find information on the following:

- Assisted living facilities, including searchable listings of facilities, licensing, inspection reports, violations and corrective actions, and contact information; for easier navigation, users may choose ambulatory, assisted care, and special care unit categories;
- Adult day care facilities, including searchable listings of providers, licensing, inspection reports, violations and corrective actions, contact information and more;
- Financial assistance;
- Domestic violence services;
- Caregiver grants;
- Hotline numbers and contact information;
- Site search engine and site map for easy navigation;
- Option to search all state government sites;
- Employment and volunteer opportunities;
- Adult-related links to other services and programs that assist seniors; and
- AS/APS guidance documents, including all manuals, forms and applications used by the program.

SPARK, the internal Website for state and local employees, is designed for easy navigation and allows users to adjust the font size of text on the screen to for easy navigation.

A Website redesign is underway to further enhance navigation tools. Also in progress is a plan to use MP3 audio files to verbally enhance Website text for those with reading, comprehension or vision difficulties.

Media Campaigns

VDSS news releases and media advisories on elder-related issues have resulted in statewide media coverage in 2007 on the following topics:

- Heating and cooling assistance, specifically addressing the elderly and disabled;
- Elder Abuse Prevention Month, including tips to recognize, avoid and report abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month;
- 2007 Governor's Community Service and Volunteerism Awards, including the Senior Volunteer Award;
- 2007 Governor's Volunteer Caregiver Recognition Award, which focused on elder caregivers and those who care for elders;
- Prisoner re-entry, including ex-offenders over the age of 60; and

- 2-1-1 Virginia, a statewide Web (www.211virginia.org) and telephone information and referral service for health and human services, is geared toward the senior population.

Information on licensed assisted living facilities, services for the elderly and other senior-related topics also was provided to the media.

VDSS launched its podcasting network this year, which allows visually impaired users to listen to information on their computers. Podcasting will be expanded in the next year and offer more information aimed at seniors.

Information useful to VDSS and local agency employees who serve those 60 and older or who are 60 and older is regularly publicized through internal newsletters, mass e-mails, flyers, internal Web site and broadcasts. Job announcements are posted in a variety of locations and formats in order to reach a diverse body of prospective applicants. Announcements are posted in newspapers and hard-copy applications are accepted – options which may appeal to older applicants. Computer-adept seniors can access job postings and submit applications electronically. VDSS regularly participates in health, wellness and senior fairs, the State Fair of Virginia and other community events to reach the senior population.

Brochures addressing senior-related topics including elder abuse, domestic violence, mandated reporter responsibilities and services for the elderly have been redesigned to make them more user friendly and provide the most up-to-date information.

Impact of an Aging Workforce

As of September 30, 2007, the VDSS classified employee workforce has a mean age of 48, and a median age of 49. The range is from 21 to 76 years. Almost 100 employees are eligible for unreduced retirement benefits in 2007. Thirty-one additional employees will be eligible for unreduced retirement benefits in 2008. The level of those reaching full retirement eligibility will increase to a peak in 2019, gradually diminishing thereafter.

The loss of staff, leadership, and institutional knowledge could hobble the agency, especially if a large number of employee retirements occur at the same time. As of September 30, 2007, about 20% of VDSS administrators were age 60 or over. That percentage could double by 2012.

The retirement of the Licensing division director after 27 years in the position is a great loss of institutional information. The assistant director, also an experienced licensing administrator, has been appointed acting director to ease the transition.

More than 20 Licensing and four of seven Adult Services staff members are eligible to retire but continue to work. Almost half of the Licensing field supervisors are eligible or will be in the next 2 years. In several cases, less senior staff in both programs are being groomed to assume the responsibilities of retirement-age staff.

Planning Ahead for an Aging Population

Protecting and maintaining the safety and wellbeing of older adults is a primary objective for VDSS and is central to its mission, “People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse and neglect to build strong futures for themselves, their families and their communities.”

Supporting this mission is the departmental goal of maximizing the economic independence, safety and stability of individuals and families in Virginia, particularly the elderly and persons with disabilities. The VDSS strategic plan includes strategies to improve business processes and service delivery of protective services and supports for elderly and disabled adults and to enhance collaboration and cooperation across the social services system.

Strategies for the coming year that support the department’s Adult In-home and Supportive Services Service Area Plan (76546802) include:

- Together with local departments of social services, VDSS will standardize data collection and management reporting on waiting lists and service plans for adult protective services, homemaker and companion services. State, regional and local staff will utilize a monthly ASAPS report focusing on timeliness of investigations as management tools for monitoring the safety of elderly and persons with disabilities.
- In 2008, VDSS will host a system-wide adult services review with local, regional and state-level managers, supervisors and front-line staff to assess current data reports on unmet service needs, waiting lists, gaps and innovations. Participants will develop and endorse a prioritized list of action steps to address the needs identified and recommend innovations for implementation.

The department will measure performance by evaluating the percentage of adults who are the subject of new APS reports after APS interventions have been put into place. This is a new measure for the program which was established to give better indications of outcomes for individuals receiving VDSS-sponsored adult services. Preliminary estimates indicate that subsequent reports of potential abuse, neglect or exploitation are received for nearly 40% of adults who are the subject of previous APS reports.

In 2007, VDSS issued revised regulations and policy documents governing key programs and services for older Virginians. Revised APS regulations and policy manuals were released that strengthen mandated reporter requirements, set higher standards for home-based care providers and implement civil penalties for mandated reporters who fail to report suspected abuse. The first local agency request to impose a civil penalty was received in October 2007.

Revised ALF standards addressed weaknesses in the care of frail elderly, including hydration, nutrition, infection control, medication management and staff qualifications. Enforcement efforts were strengthened to respond to higher risks associated with a larger proportion of residents in precarious health or physical condition. Training programs for facility staff are focused on skill enhancement and meeting residents’ individual needs.

Also this year, senior Licensing and APS staff initiated a series of meetings with DMHMRSAS officials to examine issues arising from the growing mental health population in

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ALFs, now estimated at 65%. The group is scheduling similar regional interagency meetings beginning with Southwest and Northern Virginia. Planning has begun to engage the Department of Corrections in a similar effort to address the release of growing numbers of elderly parolees to ALFs.

As part of its succession planning effort, a “VDSS Knowledge Center” of program and service information is being developed, which will help mitigate the loss of institutional knowledge as senior staff members retire. The Knowledge Center will be used to identify core competencies for staff positions and the training needed attain those competencies.