

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE AGING AND ADULT SERVICES COMMITTEE

joint with the

SENATE AGING AND YOUTH COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA

MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING
ROOM 156

MONDAY, APRIL 29, 2019
11:00 A.M.

PRESENTATION ON
OFFICE OF THE STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL (OSIG)
INVESTIGATION OF PENNSYLVANIA'S
OLDER ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES PROGRAM

HOUSE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HONORABLE THOMAS P. MURT, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE JONATHAN FRITZ
HONORABLE MARK M. GILLEN
HONORABLE JIM GREGORY
HONORABLE TIM HENNESSEY
HONORABLE MIKE JONES
HONORABLE DAWN W. KEEFER
HONORABLE ZACHARY MAKO
HONORABLE STEVEN C. MENTZER
HONORABLE BRETT R. MILLER
HONORABLE FRANCIS X. RYAN
HONORABLE MEGHAN SCHROEDER
HONORABLE WENDI THOMAS
HONORABLE PARKE WENTLING
HONORABLE STEVE SAMUELSON, DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE PAMELA A. DELISSIO
HONORABLE JENNIFER O'MARA
HONORABLE DANIELLE FRIEL OTTEN
HONORABLE MELISSA L. SHUSTERMAN

SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HONORABLE JOHN DISANTO, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN

HONORABLE MICHELE BROOKS

HONORABLE MARIA COLLETT, DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN

HONORABLE CHRISTINE TARTAGLIONE

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*Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

HOUSE COMMITTEE STAFF PRESENT:

ERIN RAUB

MAJORITY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ELIZABETH MULEWICH

MAJORITY LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

CHARLES MILLER

DEMOCRATIC SENIOR RESEARCH ANALYST

THERESA COLLINS

DEMOCRATIC SENIOR LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

I N D E X

TESTIFIERS

* * *

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
BRUCE BEEMER INSPECTOR GENERAL, OFFICE OF STATE INSPECTOR GENERAL.....	10
ROBERT TORRES ACTING SECRETARY, PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF AGING.....	26
ACCOMPANIED BY: DENISE GETGEN DIRECTOR, PROTECTIVE SERVICES OFFICE	
CHRIS DUBBLE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE ON PROTECTIVE SERVICES, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY.....	48
J.R. REED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF AGING AND ADULT SERVICES, LEHIGH COUNTY.....	63
KRISTA GEER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ACTIVE AGING, INC., CRAWFORD COUNTY AREA AGENCY ON AGING.....	74

SUBMITTED WRITTEN TESTIMONY

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(See submitted written testimony and handouts online.)

P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: I know it's a
4 minute early, but it looks like most everybody is here. We
5 can start the formalities.

6 I'm Senator John DiSanto, Chair of the Senate
7 Aging and Youth Committee. I'd like to call to order this
8 joint hearing of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee and
9 House Aging Committee. And Chairman Murt is here. I will
10 let him speak in a moment -- not let him. We're just
11 working out the dynamics of this.

12 So we're looking forward to everyone's testimony.
13 Hopefully, this can be beneficial to everybody, and I'm
14 sure we have some questions on our side. And we do
15 appreciate your time coming here.

16 So after reading the Inspector General report,
17 I'm concerned about the condition of our older adults
18 protective services system. The OSIG investigation
19 revealed a situation in which our AAA partners lack
20 sufficient training and guidelines to perform their jobs
21 and regularly fail to interview and complete elder abuse
22 investigations in accordance with Pennsylvania law.

23 The OSIG report also found the Pennsylvania
24 Department of Aging does not adequately staff its own
25 Protective Services Department in conjunction with the

1 growing demand, nor does it properly monitor or offer
2 guidance to the AAAs on case management.

3 The public has reason for concern that vulnerable
4 seniors are left at risk and not receiving the resources
5 and supports they need. These are patients, grandparents,
6 aunts, and uncles, and one day it'll ultimately be us.

7 We're here today to ensure the Department and the
8 Area Agencies on Aging are both actively pursuing and
9 implementing OSIG recommendations to better serve and
10 protect our seniors, and I'm anxious to hear everyone's
11 testimony as we move forward.

12 So without further ado, I'll ask Chairman Murt to
13 make his comments.

14 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thank you,
15 Senator.

16 Good morning, everyone. Thank you to our
17 testifiers for agreeing to come before the Committees and
18 offer your testimony regarding the report. A special
19 thanks to Senator DiSanto and Senator Collett for joining
20 together with us to have this public hearing.

21 One of the best things we could do in the General
22 Assembly is to hold meetings like this where we focus on
23 and talk about issues, concerns, and problems within our
24 State agencies. If there is a problem, we can bring all of
25 us into a room and find solutions to make the system better

1 for our older adults.

2 We certainly value the work of our Area Agencies
3 on Aging. They are truly the unsung heroes of our aging
4 networks. As we see the vast increase in the reports of
5 need over the last decade, unfortunately, that's tied to
6 more seniors at risk and more people reporting their
7 concerns to the AAAs.

8 We view today as a true opportunity to continue
9 the conversation on how to improve the system and hopefully
10 the public hearing will begin the discussion on a plan to
11 work together with the Department of Aging, with Temple
12 University, and the Area Agencies on Aging to make Older
13 Adult Protective Services system more universal and more
14 accountable. We really want to ensure the system we have
15 in place is working, and if it's not, let's work together
16 to fix it. Our seniors deserve that.

17 Thank you, Senator.

18 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Would you like
19 to introduce your Members?

20 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I'm going to ask
21 the Members of the House Committee on Aging to please
22 introduce themselves. We'll start with Representative
23 Gillen.

24 REPRESENTATIVE GILLEN: I'm Representative
25 Gillen, southern Berks and northern Lancaster Counties.

1 REPRESENTATIVE FRITZ: Good morning, friends.
2 I'm Representative Fritz proudly representing the 111th
3 District comprising Wayne and Susquehanna Counties.

4 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: Good morning. I'm
5 Representative Dawn Keefer from the 92nd District of York
6 and Cumberland Counties.

7 REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY: Good morning. The name
8 is Jim Gregory. I'm the State Representative for the 80th
9 District comprising most of Blair County.

10 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Pam DeLissio, the
11 194th, parts of Montgomery and Philadelphia Counties.

12 REPRESENTATIVE: [inaudible] Bucks County.

13 REPRESENTATIVE SCHROEDER: Meghan Schroder, Bucks
14 County, 29th District.

15 REPRESENTATIVE JONES: Mike Jones, 93rd District,
16 York County.

17 REPRESENTATIVE MENTZER: Steve Mentzer, Lancaster
18 County.

19 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Senator, I just
20 wanted to say that my friend and colleague and Co-Chair
21 Representative Steve Samuelson will be joining us shortly.

22 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Great, thank
23 you.

24 I at this time would like to introduce my Co-
25 Chair Senator Maria Collett. I believe she has some

1 opening comments as well. Thank you.

2 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 I want to thank you all for being here today and
5 thank you to my fellow Chairs, Senator DiSanto,
6 Representative Murt, and Representative Samuelson as well.

7 I look forward to serving with all of you to
8 ensure that all Pennsylvanians but especially those in our
9 most vulnerable populations, who are most often both our
10 elder and youth communities, are treated with dignity and
11 met with the highest quality of service and standard of
12 care possible.

13 I'm eager to hear the testimony of the panelists
14 before us today as the findings from the Inspector
15 General's report indicate that we haven't been able to meet
16 the level of care our Area Agencies on Aging are entrusted
17 to deliver. I'm optimistic that between those of us in
18 this room and the many stakeholders involved throughout the
19 Commonwealth will be able to renew confidence across our
20 Commonwealth in our older adult care services.

21 Again, thank you so much for making yourselves
22 available today and for the information that you've
23 provided to this Committee.

24 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Senator, I just
25 wanted to recognize my colleague Representative and

1 Chairman Tim Hennessey, who's joined us.

2 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you for
3 joining us.

4 With that, we will get right into it. I also
5 would just like to note that this is not a regular hearing
6 room, but it's sort of nice. It's a little bit more
7 conducive to some conversation.

8 You will note that there's a green button in
9 front of you that you should turn on when you're speaking
10 so everybody can hear you. You can probably turn off when
11 you're not speaking. I've learned that lesson the hard
12 way.

13 So without further ado, if you would introduce
14 yourself, Inspector General, and proceed with your
15 comments. Thank you.

16 MR. BEEMER: Thank you very much. My name is
17 Bruce Beemer. I am currently the State Inspector General
18 of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. And I'd like to thank
19 you, Chairman DiSanto, Chairman Murt, Chairman Collett,
20 Chairman Samuelson, and Members of the House Aging and
21 Adult Services Committee and the Senate Aging and Youth
22 Committee. Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to
23 appear before you today to discuss our shared mission to
24 provide the best services possible to Pennsylvania's
25 seniors.

1 I want to emphasize at the outset that the
2 Department of Aging has at all times been a cooperative and
3 engaged partner throughout the process of our investigation
4 and report. Secretary Torres and his staff have already
5 made significant Responsive changes to PDA's protective
6 services operations.

7 The many dedicated Pennsylvanians who work at
8 both the State and county level to protect our seniors
9 perform a difficult and stressful and sometimes thankless
10 job. The great majority perform that job diligently and
11 with compassion and integrity. They are deserving even
12 here of our praise and thanks. The recommendations our
13 office has made and those suggested by PDA and the AAAs as
14 well as those I anticipate from our partners here in the
15 General Assembly will improve the services that all our
16 older citizens and their families and loved ones deserve.

17 As you know, our office conducted a program
18 review of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging's
19 interaction with and oversight of the provision of Older
20 Adult Protective Services by county Area Agencies on Aging.
21 I'll refer to the latter as the AAAs.

22 In addition to the executive summary that was
23 published on our website, I'm very pleased to have provided
24 here to the Members a redacted copy of our full report,
25 which Members had prior to today's joint hearing.

1 Our report identified four main areas of concern,
2 which I'll address briefly. First, the importance of
3 conducting timely, in-person interviews with seniors to
4 follow up on reports of alleged abuse or neglect.

5 Second, the need for frontline AAA staff to
6 quickly and accurately categorize these reports of needed
7 to determine the appropriate next steps.

8 Third, the necessity of adequate training for
9 those frontline intake staff and for their supervisors and
10 other participants in the protective services system.

11 Fourth and finally, the absolute necessity to monitor and
12 review the triage of incoming reports of need for both
13 uniformity and accuracy.

14 Like many government service models in the
15 Commonwealth, responsibility for the provision of
16 protective services is shared between the PDA and the 52
17 county AAAs. The latter are the first point of contact
18 between a citizen concerned about elder abuse and the
19 system meant to provide protective services. Our
20 investigation found that in a significant number of cases
21 an in-person interview with a potential victim of elder
22 abuse was not conducted in a timely manner. There is
23 ultimately no substitute for this in-person evaluation of
24 the circumstances after receiving a report of elder abuse.

25 Additionally, our analysis of more than 18,000

1 reports in fiscal year 2016/17 indicated that in nearly
2 half of the cases an investigation was not completed within
3 the 20-day period. Of course, not all reports are the
4 same, so county AAAs must create a system to prioritize
5 those reports and allocate resources to respond.

6 Our investigation determined that there is a lack
7 of consistent standards for the categorization of the
8 reports of need as between the county AAAs. For that to
9 occur, frontline and supervisory staff must be adequately
10 trained to recognize the signs of abuse and to be able to
11 develop the relevant facts of a report of need.

12 At the time our report was completed,
13 insufficient and inconsistent training existed for the
14 staff throughout the protective services system. Even with
15 the adequate training, the need remains to consistently and
16 actively monitor and audit the process of evaluating
17 reports of need. As our report noted, the quarterly review
18 system in place at the time of completion of our
19 investigation did not allow the PDA to identify errors or
20 track trends in report categorization by AAAs in time to
21 respond to individual cases.

22 With that background in mind, our report
23 recommends the following broad categories of remediation,
24 which will help improve the provision of Older Adult
25 Protective Services. The PDAs and AAAs should continue to

1 work together to improve uniformity in the categorization
2 of reports, however made, to AAA staff. The PDA and the
3 General Assembly can work to create strong mandatory
4 training requirements for report intake staff and
5 investigators in the field. This training should be based
6 on a curriculum which provides the sophisticated skills
7 necessary to handle reports of elder abuse appropriately.

8 Temple University will continue to be an
9 excellent partner in that effort, and the National Adult
10 Protective Services Association provides a model
11 curriculum.

12 Staff handling reports of elder abuse should also
13 have access to medical professionals, as is provided in the
14 Adult Protective Services Division of DHS to help staff
15 evaluate circumstances accurately. Some standardized
16 framework for evaluating and categorizing reports of need,
17 as I discussed earlier, should be adopted by PDA and
18 promulgated to the AAAs.

19 No amount of training can redress the
20 insufficient protective services staff at PDA or the AAAs.
21 Every effort should be made to provide the resources
22 necessary to attract and retain employees to perform the
23 critical work of managing cases of elder abuse.

24 PDA and the AAAs would benefit from a shared
25 system which allows real-time evaluation of categorization

1 and investigation of reports of need. This system should
2 allow the use of data analytics to identify potential
3 problems. A centralized call center, as is utilized by
4 DHS, with child reports might assist in that effort.

5 Our office is grateful to work collaboratively
6 with all the participants in our Older Adult Protective
7 Services system. It's a privilege to appear here today,
8 and I thank you again and on behalf of our office for the
9 opportunity. I look forward to the ongoing dialogue, which
10 I believe will be helpful to all of the people we serve.
11 Thank you.

12 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: [inaudible] --
13 recognize yourselves. Michele?

14 SENATOR BROOKS: Senator Michele Brooks of the
15 50th Senatorial District, Vice Chair of the Aging
16 Committee, and the last session I was actually the Chair of
17 the Aging Committee. Thank you.

18 REPRESENTATIVE O'MARA: Good morning.
19 Representative Jennifer O'Mara, 165th District from
20 Delaware County.

21 REPRESENTATIVE SHUSTERMAN: Good morning.
22 Representative Melissa Shusterman, Chester and Montgomery
23 County, 157th. Thank you.

24 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: We'll now open
25 it up for questions. Chairman Murt will have the first

1 question. And just in the interest of time, I know there's
2 a lot of Members here. If everybody can just ask the
3 minimum number of questions and not repeat so everybody
4 gets a chance.

5 So, Chairman?

6 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Bruce, I'm curious
7 what type of credentials and background do we look for when
8 we're hiring our field reps at the current time? Are you
9 familiar with that or --

10 MR. BEEMER: Are you talking about the
11 investigators in the field?

12 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: That's correct.

13 MR. BEEMER: I think that they're looking for --
14 there's not always a requirement that someone have an
15 investigatory background. I think, you know, when they're
16 doing these sorts of hires, that makes the training all
17 that much more important because in many instances you're
18 talking about situations where the pay may not necessarily
19 be high. They're really concerned about retention and
20 turnover I believe in the AAAs. So in order to provide
21 these folks with the on-the-job training particularly in
22 that critical first 18-month period, they need to know when
23 they're out in the field from day one how to generate an
24 investigation, how to look for signs of abuse and neglect,
25 and how to do that quickly so if there's a need to respond

1 particularly in the emergency or priority cases, they're
2 able to do that.

3 I think perhaps, you know, Secretary Torres or
4 the AAA folks can give you some of the real background in
5 what their actual credentials are in terms of hiring, but I
6 know that they're not going to be hiring people oftentimes
7 that have a ton of investigative experience or fieldwork,
8 so, you know, you want them to be properly trained on the
9 front end before they're actually out there doing these
10 investigations.

11 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Just a quick
12 follow-up, to address some of the challenges and the issues
13 that we have that have been manifested, do we need more
14 people, do we need more training, or do we need both?

15 MR. BEEMER: I think in my opinion, based on what
16 our office has seen, certainly you're talking about just in
17 the last 10 years alone almost a quadrupling of the number
18 of calls that have come in that require a report of need,
19 and that's across the Commonwealth. So there has been
20 enormous strain placed on the AAAs in terms of being able
21 to handle that kind of volume because I don't think -- I
22 think they'll be the first to tell you that in terms of
23 staffing and training, they've not been able to keep up
24 with that sort of volume increase. And that is certainly
25 one of the things that we saw as a significant factor in

1 the ability to carry out both the statutory and regulatory
2 requirements of time frames with regard to investigations.

3 So the answer would be yes. The concerns that
4 are there for older Pennsylvanians have certainly come to
5 the forefront in terms of the number of calls and the need
6 for investigations, so finances, resources, and staffing is
7 really a significant issue I think both for the AAAs and
8 PDA, but they are in the best position to talk specifically
9 about that.

10 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thank you, Mr.
11 Chairman.

12 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: At this time
13 I'm not going to ask any questions. I'm going to allow the
14 other Members -- there are so many here -- so I'd like to
15 recognize Senator Collett if she would like to ask a
16 question. Then I'll ask Chairman Murt to recognize one of
17 his Members, and then we will go through, try to get as
18 many as we can.

19 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you,
20 Mr. Chairman. And thank you, General, for being here
21 today.

22 So I have a question specifically pertaining to
23 page 11 of the report where it indicates that staff rarely
24 go out after normal work hours to conduct investigations,
25 and supervisors tell them to categorize those calls as no

1 need. And the specific reason is because the AAAs don't
2 want to pay for after-hours or on-call services. And I'm
3 wondering about the investigation of the veracity of those
4 comments. Did the Office of the Inspector General review
5 timesheets to determine if staff actually did work after
6 hours or if AAAs were actually paying them overtime?

7 MR. BEEMER: That's a great question. Thank you,
8 Senator. We did not go that far in this particular
9 investigation as it relates to information that was
10 provided by various employees about what they were seeing
11 out in the field. It included along with a lot of the
12 statistical information to highlight an area that we wanted
13 the Department of Aging to be aware of, that there were
14 employees that were showing concern about whether or not
15 these no-need categorizations were happening as a result of
16 reasons outside of the no-need.

17 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you.
18 Mr. Chairman, can I ask a follow-up?

19 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay.

20 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you.
21 I appreciate it.

22 And further down on that page it talks about how
23 the PDA isn't aware of these specific incidences because of
24 the quarterly review, and I'm wondering in your opinion is
25 a quarterly review adequate?

1 MR. BEEMER: No. I mean, in the sense that --
2 and I know this is an area that was looked at being
3 addressed. Our investigation found that in many instances
4 with regard to looking at individual cases, not having
5 real-time information coming back from the AAAs as to
6 what's happening led to a situation where in many instances
7 it was nine months to a year before PDA would have become
8 aware of specific instances.

9 And, as I'm sure everybody in the room can
10 appreciate, when you're talking about situations where
11 you're having protection, an abuse or neglect situation,
12 that could just be too long. So we were concerned from
13 what we were seeing about the lack of real-time information
14 getting back to the Department both from an informational
15 perspective and from a monitoring and oversight
16 perspective.

17 So I know that they have taken significant steps
18 since the completion of the report to address that very
19 issue, and, again, I think they'd be in the best position
20 to tell you specifically what they're doing.

21 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Senator, would
22 you like to just introduce yourself? Everybody else had a
23 chance.

24 SENATOR: [inaudible].

25 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I'd like to

1 recognize Representative Pam DeLissio.

2 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman. Good morning.

4 MR. BEEMER: Good morning.

5 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Why are parts of the
6 port report redacted?

7 MR. BEEMER: The parts that are redacted really
8 entirely deal with individuals where we've redacted names
9 and other identifying information for folks that have
10 spoken to us. It's very important when we do
11 investigations that individuals know that they can speak
12 with us in a confidential setting. Otherwise, particularly
13 with State employees and others that are providing
14 information, we may not get full, accurate, and complete
15 information as a result of that. So we've taken great care
16 in this and other investigations to not reveal the
17 identities publicly of folks that have spoken to us.

18 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: So what category -- are
19 these almost exclusively then employees of AAAs who are
20 redacted here or are they --

21 MR. BEEMER: They can be employees of AAAs. They
22 can be folks that are employed at Temple. They can be
23 folks that are employed at the Pennsylvania Department of
24 Aging. It just depends.

25 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: So my other question

1 very quickly is might these be people with limited training
2 and experience who have weighed in on these questionings so
3 their observations maybe should be considered limited
4 because their experience is limited?

5 MR. BEEMER: It --

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: I mean, I believe the
7 report talks about the limited training, the limited
8 experience, so my concern is that the information may be
9 their opinion or their thought about how it should be.

10 MR. BEEMER: Sure. And that's always -- you
11 know, when we provide that sort of information to the
12 Department, it's with the understanding that in certain
13 situations it is opinion evidence, and it's for the
14 Department to look at and determine what they would like to
15 do with it.

16 I can tell you in this situation very few of the
17 individuals that we talked to were folks out doing
18 frontline investigations, so that's not really who was the
19 focus.

20 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Not doing it. Thank
21 you, Mr. Chairman.

22 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: I'd like to
23 recognize Senator Brooks.

24 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have
25 a couple of questions. Just to follow up with --

1 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Excuse me,
2 Michele, we're trying to limit to one --

3 SENATOR BROOKS: Okay.

4 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: -- so we went
5 a little off track there because there are so many Members.
6 Thank you.

7 SENATOR BROOKS: Just to follow up with Senator
8 Collett, I'm not quite sure how there is validity to your
9 response then if you did not look at timesheets and verify
10 information that was given to you? That's a statement.

11 My question is several times the report mentions
12 that someone reported that AAAs do X or Y. What did your
13 department do to verify or refute such claims?

14 MR. BEEMER: Could you repeat that, please?

15 SENATOR BROOKS: In your reports it says that the
16 AAAs did X or they did Y. What did you do, what did your
17 department do to verify that that actually occurred? And
18 the question actually follows up with Senator Collett. You
19 know, people mentioned they did not work overtime, they did
20 not go out, but yet you did not verify this information.

21 MR. BEEMER: Well, it's important to bear in mind
22 there's typically two aspects to when we do a report.
23 Sometimes -- and this is always one of the issues when we
24 make these reports public. Some of the information we
25 provide is done in an anecdotal way to alert the department

1 that this is what folks are saying. We had a specific
2 charge that we were looking into which was the question
3 centered around the categorization of reports of need and
4 the training of the individuals that were out in the
5 fields. So some of the information that's provided isn't
6 intended to be an exhaustive review of other ancillary
7 issues. And that falls into that category. And of course
8 we're certainly happy to do further investigation and
9 information if that's what the Department of Aging feels
10 would be appropriate.

11 With regard to some of the AAAs, the information
12 we were providing was through the Department of Aging, and
13 that was information we were getting from Department of
14 Aging employees who wanted the Department to be aware
15 that's what their own employees were seeing.

16 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you.

17 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you very much. I
18 appreciate that response. I think that, you know, there's
19 been a lot of concern on this investigation and a
20 spotlight, and I think that one of the important things
21 that we have to do as we move forward, that information is
22 verified if there's actually going to be an official
23 report. Thank you very much.

24 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you.

25 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I'd like to

1 recognize Representative Dawn Keefer.

2 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: Thank you. My questions
3 have been answered.

4 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Any other House
5 Members with questions?

6 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay. If
7 there's no further questions, I'm going to take a Chair
8 prerogative just to ask a brief one.

9 Generally speaking, these complaints, were they
10 coming from within the AAA or the former employees or
11 vulnerable seniors? Because you represent the report as
12 being representative of most of the agencies.

13 MR. BEEMER: A number of them from within the
14 Department itself.

15 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Any seniors,
16 specific seniors you spoke to or --

17 MR. BEEMER: Only on limited investigations that
18 we note in the report.

19 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay. Thank
20 you. We appreciate your time, and in the interest of time,
21 we will move to our next presenter.

22 MR. BEEMER: Am I --

23 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: I'm sorry?

24 MR. BEEMER: Am I free to go or is that --

25 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Yes, we didn't

1 swear you in, so I guess you're free to leave without the
2 sergeant-in-arms tracking you down. Thank you.

3 MR. BEEMER: Thank you very much.

4 SECRETARY TORRES: Hi. I am Robert Torres,
5 Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Aging.

6 Good morning, Chairman DiSanto, Chairwoman
7 Collett, Chairman Murt, and Members of both the Senate
8 Aging and Youth Committee and the House Aging and Older
9 Adult Services Committee. With me today is Denise Getgen
10 sitting to my right. She's the Director of the Protective
11 Services Office at the Department who oversees the
12 provision of technical assistance, monitoring, and
13 compliance for protective services provided by the local
14 Area Agencies on Aging throughout the Commonwealth.

15 We are grateful for the opportunity to speak with
16 you today regarding the Department's response to the
17 September 2018 investigation report by the Office of the
18 State Inspector General on our department's monitoring of
19 county-based agencies that investigate allegations of elder
20 abuse.

21 The Department is steadfast in its duties to
22 protect vulnerable older adults from abuse, neglect,
23 abandonment, and exploitation. This is a bedrock principle
24 for the Department, which we take very seriously as it is
25 required by both the Older Adults Protective Services Act

1 and the Federal Older Adult Americans Act. In addition, it
2 is embedded in the Department's foundation of prevention
3 and protection outlined in our 2016-2020 State Plan on
4 Aging. Nevertheless, the Department can and will always
5 strive to improve.

6 The investigation and subsequent report by the
7 OSIG highlighted findings which the Department has and will
8 continue to address. I'd like to thank State Inspector
9 General Beemer for his agency's diligence, support, and
10 cooperation throughout this process. Although many
11 improvement measures were already in place prior to the
12 release of the report, the Department, working with the
13 AAAs, continues to pursue opportunities for further
14 refinement related to the findings identified in the
15 report.

16 Unfortunately, elder abuse is on the rise in
17 Pennsylvania. The Department has experienced a continued
18 increase in the number and complexity of elder abuse
19 reports. For example, the Department experienced a 60-
20 percent increase in the number of reports received and a
21 61-percent increase in the number of reports substantiated
22 from fiscal years 2014/15 to 2017/18. This trend has
23 numerous causes, a growing aging population, increased
24 awareness of protective services, increased ability to
25 perpetrate financial exploitation, among others. The

1 problem is neither disappearing, nor is it likely to
2 decrease in the future. As a result, these factors place
3 added pressure on the Department and the AAAs' resources to
4 meet the needs of older adults at risk.

5 The OSIG report highlighted these challenges and
6 identified opportunities for improvement. The OSIG report
7 highlighted several findings: inadequacy of the AAAs in
8 meeting timelines for face-to-face visits and determination
9 of cases, insufficient training provided by PDA to the
10 AAAs, inadequate monitoring of the AAAs by PDA, a lack of
11 timely guidance to the AAAs by PDA, and inadequate internal
12 staffing for protective services at PDA.

13 When the OSIG' investigation began in May of
14 2017, the Department was already working to improve its
15 monitoring of the delivery of protective services and
16 better positioned the Department to improve quality while
17 facing the growing need. The work resulted in the creation
18 of an updated monitoring tool and process used by the
19 Department for oversight. This tool has helped standardize
20 the process and measures by which the AAAs are monitored.

21 Prior to the implementation of this new
22 monitoring tool, each AAA was only monitored once annually
23 regardless of the findings. Now, not only are annual
24 visits occurring, follow-up monitoring can occur every six
25 months or quarterly depending on the level of deficiencies

1 identified in the prior monitoring visit. This has helped
2 identify and address concerns more quickly and enabled the
3 Department to work collaboratively with the AAAs on
4 addressing instances of noncompliance.

5 The AAAs have been cooperative and diligent in
6 their efforts to improve and meet the demand. To improve
7 the timeliness of investigations, the Department is making
8 changes to the investigation, summary, and assessment form
9 to allow for more accurate data collection regarding the
10 timing of the required face-to-face visits. Additionally,
11 the Department is updating policies regarding procedure and
12 documentation standards and locating older adults who may
13 be missing.

14 The Department has also created a report for the
15 AAAs to access, which provides each AAA with a snapshot of
16 cases with missing information or those approaching the
17 regulatory-required deadline for case substantiation. This
18 measure allows AAAs to prioritize cases in real-time and
19 ensure more timely assistance to older adults.

20 Additionally, Temple University's Institute for
21 Protective Services, the Department's contracted training
22 services provider, has added staff to help the AAAs' meet
23 the growing demand for financial exploitation cases. We
24 know that these types of cases typically take longer to
25 investigate than most other types of abuse cases because of

1 the nature and the volume of records to examine. Temple
2 has staff with expertise in conducting financial
3 exploitation cases, including a certified fraud examiner.
4 This is a great asset in providing this much-needed
5 expertise to the AAAs.

6 In regard to training, a new intake worker
7 training curriculum jointly developed by the Department and
8 Temple incorporating feedback from the AAAs has been
9 created. This training is more comprehensive, covers all
10 required content per the regulations, includes a reference
11 guide, and requires a passing score of 80 percent on a
12 competency evaluation.

13 Through the Department's efforts, Temple has
14 increased enrichment trainings from 7 to 14 annually. In
15 fact, much of the training offered goes beyond what is
16 required in regulation. In early 2019, the Department
17 hired a Director of Education and Outreach to ensure
18 available trainings are updated and more easily accessible.
19 Through that work, we have added online training modules
20 for AAA staff in the field to access as needed.

21 To ensure timely guidance is given, the
22 Department has streamlined the process for issuing aging
23 program directives and aging technical assistance
24 bulletins. The Department has standardize its monitoring
25 results to expedite delivery to the AAAs. The Department

1 is also revising its monitoring APD to allow for the
2 monitoring of active cases as opposed to reviewing only
3 closed cases. To better provide technical assistance to
4 the AAAs, the Department has added staff to its Protective
5 Services Office. The Department will also continue to look
6 for opportunities to create efficiencies and streamline
7 processes that empower staff to accomplish more value-added
8 work.

9 Finally, I want to thank each of you and your
10 colleagues in the General Assembly for the inclusion of
11 \$2.1 million for protective services in last year's budget.
12 That funding enabled the AAA network to hire additional
13 staff, add capacity to handle financial exploitation cases,
14 and more. We appreciate this support and hope that the
15 same support will be forthcoming for the additional \$2.8
16 million in Governor Wolf's proposed budget for fiscal year
17 1920.

18 While the report highlighted challenges and
19 opportunities for the Department and the AAAs, I am proud
20 of our team at the Department and all the local protective
21 services staff across the Commonwealth who have and
22 continue to meet these challenges. There is still much
23 work to do, but we will continue to collaborate with the
24 AAAs and seek support from the General Assembly to further
25 protect and serve the most vulnerable.

1 Thank you for all that you do to support the
2 aging services network, and thank you for the opportunity
3 to advocate on behalf of the elder population that we
4 serve. Thank you.

5 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you very
6 much for your testimony.

7 As of January this year, PDA said it was
8 reviewing all cases categorized as no need on a daily basis
9 with the authority to recategorize and require an
10 investigation of necessary. How many times has the
11 Department reclassified and called upon the local AAAs to
12 investigate?

13 SECRETARY TORRES: I'm going to turn that over to
14 Denise because she's been responsible for that function.

15 MS. GETGEN: We do this every single day where we
16 are looking at every case that comes in where the AAAs have
17 categorized as no need, so every case that they see that
18 they're categorizing no need, we're looking at that real-
19 time. So every morning we're meeting and we're doing that.
20 So it varies day-to-day and from AAA to AAA. Some have had
21 none at all that have been overturned, and some have had
22 some that have been overturned. So it varies from AAA to
23 AAA.

24 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Good. Could
25 you get me a number on that and get it to me after the

1 hearing then, please, on the average number?

2 SECRETARY TORRES: Okay.

3 MS. GETGEN: Sure.

4 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you.

5 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Good morning,
6 Secretary. Thank you for your testimony.

7 SECRETARY TORRES: Good morning.

8 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Secretary, if a
9 AAA contacts the Department and asks for assistance due to
10 a staffing issue, what technical assistance might they be
11 provided?

12 SECRETARY TORRES: It depends on the request,
13 but, for example, where we're providing technical
14 assistance, if a AAA is having issues with compliance, we
15 will help them with data requests. If they have backlogs,
16 we will try to see if there's things we can do. For
17 example, we have done cross-matches with death records just
18 to see if we can help them reduce some of the backlog due
19 to individuals passing away, so trying to help them
20 prioritize some of the workload.

21 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Is the assistance
22 normally rendered in a timely fashion?

23 SECRETARY TORRES: It has since I've been there.
24 We've tried our best wherever there's a need to provide
25 that level of technical assistance. We're trying to be as

1 responsive as we can be.

2 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thank you.

3 I just want to recognize Chairman Samuelson is
4 with us and also Representative Parke Wentling has joined
5 us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Secretary.

6 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you.

7 Senator Collett?

8 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your
10 testimony.

11 I have a question about the staff that you
12 currently have in the Protective Services Unit. Can you
13 tell me how many that is and how that compares with
14 neighboring States and their approaches to adult protective
15 services?

16 SECRETARY TORRES: We currently have 16 staff
17 that's Commonwealth and contractors. I don't have a basis
18 of comparison to other States, but I can tell you since
19 2014 we've increased five staff, and I'm considering some
20 additional staffing support as well.

21 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I'd like to
22 recognize Representative Gregory.

23 REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 And, Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here
25 today. This is a fairly simple question. I just want to

1 make sure that I'm making note of in Blair County data not
2 available on investigations. What is that an indication
3 of, please?

4 SECRETARY TORRES: Excuse me?

5 REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY: Data not available on
6 the increase of protective services by county, reports of
7 need and investigations it says four dots indicates data
8 not available. Thank you.

9 MS. GEER: That was part of my testimony that I
10 provided, and I reached out to each of the AAAs who would
11 have representatives the room so that they could see that
12 information, and that particular county had not kept a
13 differentiating list between the reports of need received
14 and the amount of investigations that were done. That's
15 why there's a dot here. They hadn't differentiated between
16 the reports received and the investigations done.

17 REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY: Thank you. Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Senator
20 Brooks.

21 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank
22 you, Acting Secretary Torres.

23 As we increase requirements for additional
24 training and oversight and different things like that, how
25 is the Department going to help the AAAs offset that

1 staffing so that there's still staffing that remains in
2 those counties?

3 SECRETARY TORRES: Well, we are meeting biweekly
4 with the AAAs, with the association and their leadership.
5 Any policy considerations that we have -- as a matter of
6 fact, one of the findings in the report talked about not
7 issuing policy changes timely. We've changed that. We've
8 streamlined the process so that we can get a policy out
9 from when we have a draft to when it's concluded in about
10 six weeks, and two of those weeks are allowing the
11 association to let us know what concerns they have. So if
12 there are specific resource considerations, those are
13 concerns that we're actively discussing as part of those
14 biweekly meetings that we're having.

15 SENATOR BROOKS: Would they have online training
16 or would you be taking them out of the field and bringing
17 them here to Harrisburg?

18 SECRETARY TORRES: Well --

19 SENATOR BROOKS: That's my concern. As you bring
20 folks here to Harrisburg, who is left in the field at home
21 in the counties?

22 SECRETARY TORRES: I think those are valid
23 concerns. One of the things that you'll probably hear from
24 Temple Institute is that we're looking at ways to do more
25 online training, just find the right balance of in-person

1 versus online, including short modules so if somebody needs
2 a quick refresher because they're just hitting a particular
3 case that they don't always see too often, they can go and
4 refresh and get some support that way. So we're trying to
5 be sensitive to the resource considerations out in the
6 field as well.

7 SENATOR BROOKS: Okay. Thank you.

8 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative
9 O'Mara.

10 REPRESENTATIVE O'MARA: Thank you, Chairman.

11 So I hail from Delaware County, which is one of
12 the counties included in the report that went from a red
13 status to a yellow status. And I was reading to see that
14 there were times where we knew there was something wrong
15 but they didn't go back because of the protocol of only
16 investigating once a year regardless of what you find.

17 So I see now there's a new monitoring tool and
18 that it allows you to go back six months or quarterly. Can
19 you speak to what that looks like? If a county is red,
20 does that mean you're automatically going back quarterly
21 or --

22 SECRETARY TORRES: Yes --

23 REPRESENTATIVE O'MARA: -- what's that new
24 system?

25 SECRETARY TORRES: Yes, so if a county is deemed

1 red, then we will plan to go back within 90 days. There's
2 a corrective action plan that is developed, and we'll work
3 with the county to provide whatever technical assistance
4 may be needed. If they're yellow, then we plan to go back
5 within six months, but again, there's a lot of ongoing
6 conversations and technical support that we provide as
7 needed for those that are red or yellow.

8 Denise?

9 MS. GETGEN: We also ask for -- if someone's red
10 meaning they're having a lot of difficulty, a lot of cases
11 coming in, we also ask for a weekly status so on every
12 single active case we're having almost a daily if not a
13 daily interaction on every single case that's active and on
14 cases that are closing. So we're hearing and we're having
15 dialogue about every case.

16 In addition, we're going onsite to do training.
17 Sometimes we have Temple do some training onsite as well.
18 So those are the kinds of things that we're doing, you
19 know, sort of real-time we'll work with them to develop,
20 you know, what kind of training exactly are their staff
21 needing, what exactly the technical assistance is. So it's
22 based on we'll look at the monitoring results and we'll see
23 exactly what technical assistance they need, and we build
24 their training, you know, consistent with what it is
25 exactly they're having trouble with so that we're not

1 finding the same things repeatedly like we had been in the
2 past.

3 REPRESENTATIVE O'MARA: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. GETGEN: We also have provided every single
5 Area Agency on Aging with our monitoring tool, and many of
6 them are starting to use that internally on their own
7 cases, so they're using that as their own internal quality
8 assurance, which I think is very helpful to them.

9 REPRESENTATIVE O'MARA: Yes, that is. Okay.

10 Thank you.

11 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Senator
12 Brooks.

13 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 I just want to go back to my previous question
15 with the Inspector General. What is the Department going
16 to do to work with the Inspector General's Office so that
17 this information is validated and verified? My concern is
18 -- I don't we have a list of the AAAs that were looked at
19 or interviewed, so I'm glad that you're color-coding and
20 trying to identify which AAAs are struggling, but the
21 concern is that there's going to be reactions that are
22 going to increase the workload with paperwork to some AAAs
23 that may not be having problems on information or on a
24 report that really wasn't validated or verified. And I
25 have a concern about that.

1 Historically, I think you're aware that I'm very
2 much in support of my local Area Agencies on Aging, the
3 hundreds of thousands of seniors across the State they
4 serve. And my constituents prefer local. And I have a
5 real concern that somehow a report that was put out there
6 that was not validated or verified is somehow going to
7 penalize the AAAs and remove them from our local residents
8 who trust them into a 1-800 number into the Department of
9 Aging.

10 So how are you going to protect and work with the
11 AAAs so that that doesn't happen so that our residents have
12 boots on the ground that are working with people that they
13 trust and not shifting this to a 1-800 number that really
14 has no connection to those local communities?

15 SECRETARY TORRES: Well, Senator, I certainly
16 understand your concern based on our first meeting. We
17 haven't talked about centralizing anything. We have
18 focused on looking at our process, looking at data, again,
19 making sure that that data entry is accurate, complete,
20 timely because -- and we've had frank discussions. That's
21 a reflection on everybody's performance, so that data needs
22 to be complete and accurate.

23 There is no question that the AAAs, as the
24 frontline organization that serves the local service areas,
25 are an important organization, but we've been working very

1 collaboratively to go through this report, and I can tell
2 you of all the recommendations that the Inspector General
3 has presented, intake training, updating the content,
4 that's done. That was done cooperatively. Requiring
5 ongoing training for intake workers, again, that's done.
6 We updated the curriculum, it's being piloted in six
7 counties, so we're doing it in a gradual, incremental way,
8 so again, trying to be sensitive to the impact on resources
9 at the local level.

10 Explore better ways to educate AAA staff on
11 topics within a reasonable time after hire, I think that's
12 an ongoing process and an ongoing discussion in terms of
13 what are the best ways that we can do this going back to
14 the earlier question about impacts and what's the right
15 balance of in-person versus online training and resources
16 that could be available.

17 Considering centralized intake, that would be a
18 huge effort, right, from a resource standpoint and a
19 funding standpoint, so that's something that we could
20 explore, but that's not something that we're looking at
21 right now.

22 I'm really focused on trying to see how quickly
23 we can update our policies, make sure that all the pieces
24 of this system that's designed to protect our seniors are
25 working well together. I mean, ultimately, we have the

1 same goals, protect our seniors and make sure that all the
2 parts of the system are in good alignment.

3 Monitoring the length of time that cases are
4 open, we're providing -- is it a weekly report?

5 MS. GETGEN: Yes.

6 SECRETARY TORRES: And all the AAAs are getting
7 weekly reports that shows where there might be incomplete
8 data, where they may be running up against a timeline.
9 That was done in the spirit of, hey, we're going to provide
10 feedback so that you're seeing exactly what we're seeing
11 and hopefully reacting positively to it.

12 Again, regulatory violations, the green, red,
13 yellow process, that's in place and we're actively working
14 with anybody, any of the organizations that have issues.
15 We're actively supporting them and doing what we can.

16 Training on categorization, Denise talked about,
17 you know, the engagement she has. The other thing that we
18 do is we have a monthly conference call or
19 webinar with protective services supervisors, so anything
20 she's seen, she's saying, hey, these are trends or patterns
21 that we're seeing and they have a discussion. So I think
22 we're doing what we can to be as cooperative and
23 collaborative in solving this to be as efficient and
24 productive as possible.

25 SENATOR BROOKS: I appreciate your response.

1 Thank you very much. And I also appreciate your advocacy
2 for further resources to the Area Agencies on Aging. As
3 you're aware and I'm aware and many of us that they do a
4 plethora of things for our seniors in our communities on a
5 shoestring budget, so I appreciate your advocacy to try and
6 get them further resources. Thank you.

7 SECRETARY TORRES: Thank you.

8 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I want to
9 recognize Representative Brett Miller, who has joined us.

10 The next question is from Representative Wendi
11 Thomas.

12 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Hi. Most of my questions
13 got answered, so I'm going to try to keep this brief to
14 just what hasn't -- and it's really around training, so
15 some is online, some is in person. That was one question.
16 It said that there were enrichment trainings. Are these
17 available or required? And are the trainings that people
18 complete part of their annual review process? Because my
19 experience with training programs, that's a huge advantage.

20 SECRETARY TORRES: Yes, I'm going to ask Denise
21 to answer that question.

22 MS. GETGEN: The enrichment trainings are
23 required by regulation, and it is part of their annual
24 monitoring or this ongoing monitoring quality assurance
25 monitoring that we do at the Department.

1 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative
2 Dawn Keefer.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: Thank you. My question
4 is revolving around the money. The \$2.8 million additional
5 dollars that were requested that the Governor has in this
6 year's budget, would that be going to the AAAs? It looks
7 like there's been a lot done in terms of protocol and
8 trying to streamline training and education and report
9 intake, but understanding that these AAAs are underfunded
10 usually and they are under-resourced as well, they don't
11 have enough employees -- penalizing them with the 10
12 percent funding potentially that they could get if they
13 don't comply or regulatory violations. I'm just trying to
14 figure out how they're going to adapt to all of this
15 without the resources and the staff needed, so just
16 checking. Is that \$2.8 million going out to those actual
17 AAAs?

18 SECRETARY TORRES: Yes, it's committed to be
19 distributed to the AAAs so --

20 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: Okay. So it's not for
21 additional programming and internally for the Department of
22 Aging --

23 SECRETARY TORRES: Well, it would be, you know,
24 whatever their particular needs are, so they would submit
25 to the Department what their particular needs are and our

1 plan is to distribute the \$2.8 million like we did \$2.1
2 million this year.

3 REPRESENTATIVE KEEFER: Okay. Thank you.

4 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative
5 DeLissio.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Thank you. To continue
7 along the lines of funding, do you happen to know,
8 Secretary, if funding was at all considered during the
9 investigation? In other words, are some of these issues a
10 result of chronic underfunding particularly where the
11 demand may be the largest? I do represent part of
12 Philadelphia County. So do you have any idea if funding
13 was even a variable that was considered that may have led
14 to this situation?

15 SECRETARY TORRES: I do not. I'm sorry.

16 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: And then I see that the
17 \$2.1 million last year is fine, the \$2.8 million that's
18 proposed this year, but the question is how much funding is
19 needed to do the job correctly, not how much is being
20 offered? Is this sufficient? Are these dollars sufficient
21 to do the job that we're asking the AAAs to do?

22 In my eight-plus years in the legislature, I have
23 in particular seen human services programs be chronically
24 underfunded or see some of that funding cut, and, you know,
25 our expectations go up but the funding goes down. These

1 are labor-intensive positions, and I often think that
2 sometimes the General Assembly has expectations that are
3 not realistic or in line with what we're willing to fund
4 and give a priority to funding. Are these dollars
5 sufficient to do the job?

6 SECRETARY TORRES: Well, we would always welcome
7 additional resources. With the \$2.1 million that was
8 allocated this year and the \$2.8 million-plus is roughly \$5
9 million, so that's a good investment in terms of helping to
10 support the increased demand and what we're seeing
11 happening in the protective services area.

12 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Thank you.

13 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I just want to
14 recognize Representative Zach Mako, who has joined us.

15 Mr. Chairman --

16 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Go ahead. Do
17 you have any other --

18 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: No other
19 questions.

20 Chairman Samuelson -- I'm sorry, maybe we should
21 bounce to the Senator.

22 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: No, we're
23 good.

24 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Okay. Chairman
25 Samuelson.

1 HOUSE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRMAN SAMUELSON: I just
2 wanted to follow up on the funding. I know the increase,
3 the budget the Governor has proposed has a significant
4 increase from the current \$2.1 million to roughly \$5
5 million. I also know that when we heard the testimony at
6 the budget hearings, the request for Area Agencies on Aging
7 for this next year was \$8 million, so going up to \$5
8 million is a very positive step, but we can't leave unsaid
9 that their request is actually for \$8 million for adult
10 protective services. I think that's very important for us
11 to continue to focus on. Our budget is not yet done for
12 this year, so we could revisit that and go back.

13 I do also know that funding for human services at
14 the Federal level is also threatened. I think I read it
15 was a 12-percent reduction proposed down in Washington, so
16 I think we have to keep the focus on adult protective
17 services, and let's keep in mind that \$5 million is great,
18 but the request was actually \$8 million.

19 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Mr. Chairman,
20 that's it.

21 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: We have a few
22 minutes. The Department's Protective Service database
23 shows AAAs failed to conduct face-to-face interviews in 20
24 percent of the cases within the required time frame. It
25 also shows the AAAs failed to determine if abuse

1 allegations are substantiated in 40 percent of the cases
2 within the legally required time period. Now, we're going
3 to receive testimony from the AAAs that they don't think
4 that's the actual time frames with which they must comply
5 with. Do you have a response to that?

6 SECRETARY TORRES: Not at this time. I will wait
7 to hear their testimony. Again, it's data that's coming
8 right from the database where they're required to input
9 data.

10 If you look at the report, one of my concerns was
11 that there's a certain percentage of data inaccuracies, so
12 I think that is something that we have been having frank
13 discussions about and definitely have to improve in that
14 area because it reflects performance.

15 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay. Are
16 there any other last questions? Or we will move on.

17 Mr. Secretary and your team, thank you for
18 appearing. I appreciate it.

19 SECRETARY TORRES: Thanks, Mr. Chairman.

20 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay. Our
21 next testifier will be Chris Dubble, Executive Director,
22 Temple University Institute on Protective Services. So
23 thank you.

24 MR. DUBBLE: Good morning, and I guess almost
25 good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen of the Committee. My

1 name is Chris Dubble, and I am the Assistant Director for
2 Training at Temple University Harrisburg. Since 2014, I
3 have also been the Director of the Institute on Protective
4 Services at Temple University Harrisburg. Thank you for
5 the opportunity to speak to you today about our work at the
6 Institute.

7 I started working with the Institute in 2002 when
8 we were originally funded by the Pennsylvania Commission on
9 Crime and Delinquency. Since 2005, we have been funded by
10 the Department of Aging.

11 The Institute has always been focused on three
12 core areas. First is our training. The Institute is the
13 sole provider of the basic training and primary provider of
14 the enrichment training for staff working in protective
15 services from the 52 Area Agencies on Aging. The basic
16 training is the course required by regulation prior to
17 someone being able to work in protective services.
18 Enrichment trainings meet the need for annual continuing
19 education required by regulation.

20 Starting in 2016, the Institute has increased the
21 number of training opportunities in order to reduce class
22 size, provide better access to the Area Agencies on Aging,
23 and more effectively utilize adult learning principles. We
24 currently provide every year 10 basic training course
25 sessions, previously two; at least 14 enrichment sessions,

1 previously seven. Enrichment training topics are selected
2 every year in conjunction with the Department and based
3 upon feedback from protective services caseworkers. Last
4 year, we had 169 Area Agency on Aging staff attend the
5 basic course and over 650 participants in our enrichment
6 courses.

7 The Institute also offers a protective services
8 supervisor course and a five-year refresher course. These
9 courses target the educational needs of supervisors and
10 experienced protective services caseworkers. The Institute
11 has focused this fiscal year on the development of
12 e-learning modules. E-learning modules currently being
13 written and produced include topics on medical issues,
14 self-neglect, financial exploitation, drug and alcohol
15 abuse, to name a few.

16 In addition to training for protective services
17 caseworkers, the Institute provides education for other
18 Area Agency on Aging staff like solicitors and other allied
19 professionals about the identification, referral, and
20 resolution of cases of victimization of older adults.
21 Training for allied professionals is typically at the
22 request of the Department, an agency area on aging or a
23 local county task force. Last year, we trained over 600
24 allied professionals.

25 A second area is our work of case consultation.

1 The Institute assists Area Agencies on Aging and law
2 enforcement to effectively investigate and resolve cases of
3 elder victimization. We consult on cases that either arise
4 from the work of the AAAs or that law enforcement does not
5 have the resources to move forward on their own.

6 While the Institute can provide consultation on
7 all types of abuse and neglect, the primary need has been
8 around the issue of financial exploitation. The Institute
9 helps the Area Agencies on Aging and law enforcement
10 determine whether there are civil and/or criminal remedies
11 to seek justice for victimized older adults. The Institute
12 currently has 13 active cases. In just those 13 cases, the
13 Institute has supported the Area Agencies on Aging in
14 protecting \$4.6 million of older adults' assets.

15 Our consultation is done primarily by our
16 Assistant Director Richard Albrecht, who is a former
17 protective services supervisor and caseworker; Caroline
18 Burnell, our latest or our newest staff person and a
19 certified fraud examiner; as well as Dr. Ronald Costen, who
20 is the former Director of the Institute and currently a
21 consultant with us.

22 The third area is our work with local task
23 forces. From the beginning, the Institute has helped to
24 develop task forces at the county level to address
25 victimization of older adults. The Institute continues to

1 support the work of the Department in developing and
2 supporting these task forces. The task forces take many
3 variations from close collaboration between the Area Agency
4 on Aging and law enforcement to large multidisciplinary
5 task forces that function as their own nonprofit.

6 The Institute has developed a task force manual
7 that provides support to counties that want to start a task
8 force. The Institute also provides in-person support for
9 developing an existing task force, as requested.

10 These areas keep us very busy, and we are also
11 continually working on new ideas like producing a virtual
12 reality training to simulate a case experience, increasing
13 the evaluation metrics that we use on our own training
14 quality, and always trying to find new and better ways to
15 meet the educational needs of the protective services
16 caseworkers on the frontline.

17 Before I conclude, I would like to return to
18 training and briefly share our perspective on the education
19 of protective services caseworkers. My staff and I have
20 had the opportunity to provide training not just here in
21 Pennsylvania but in other States as well. The importance
22 of education for protective services caseworkers is due to
23 the critical nature of their work and the generalist
24 knowledge that they must have.

25 When I came out of social work school in the

1 early '90s I was taught that a generalist needed to know a
2 little bit about a lot. I guarantee you that my professors
3 who taught me that principle did not understand modern
4 protective services. Our protective services caseworkers
5 need to know a lot about a lot.

6 Our call for more training should be seen as our
7 recognition of the importance of the work of protective
8 services and the daily challenges they face. We believe
9 that education should come from a variety of sources,
10 including best practice, resource tools, and on-the-job
11 experience. All training for protective services
12 caseworkers needs to be accessible, applicable, and
13 achievable.

14 Our goal at the Institute, in collaboration with
15 the Department and the Area Agencies on Aging, is to
16 provide training and consultation that support our
17 protective services caseworkers who work to keep all older
18 Pennsylvanians safe from abuse, neglect, exploitation, and
19 abandonment.

20 I wanted to end by again thanking the Committees
21 for this opportunity to share our work with you, and I'm
22 certainly happy to entertain any questions. Thank you.

23 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Thank you for
24 your testimony. I'm going to put my private industry hat
25 on for a moment. As a subcontractor providing training to

1 an organization, I would think it would be your
2 responsibility to understand the evolving nature of
3 training needed, workloads, all those things. The
4 organization is looking to you for direction and
5 professional services to provide the training. I don't see
6 that anywhere, that your organization stood up and said
7 we're missing our training requirements, the workload's up,
8 the training itself needs to evolve to address all these
9 issues. Can you explain that to me?

10 MR. DUBBLE: I think we have been. I think we
11 have had the good dialogue with the Department. And again,
12 an example of that is we approached the Department back in
13 2016 about increasing the number of basic courses, which we
14 did, also increasing the amount of enrichment trainings
15 that we did with them, with the Department.

16 We have talked about our being better at having
17 more e-learning modules that are accessible, as was
18 mentioned earlier, so we're not just taking people out of
19 the field. I think that that has always been a concern is
20 that when you have people being trained, the cases do not
21 stop, and so we've wanted to make sure that we were
22 providing training that helped to minimize or at least
23 balance that very practical need, and that's why again this
24 year we have really stressed and focused on our e-learning
25 modules to try to get those written and produced.

1 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Did you go
2 outside of the chain of command at all? Because prior to
3 the report release, there was really -- at least from my
4 perspective as a legislator I was not aware of any of these
5 issues to bring them to a broader audience for that need.
6 That's the specific question I'm asking.

7 MR. DUBBLE: As a subcontractor of the
8 Department, we would have continued to bring anything that
9 -- our ideas, concerns, any of that to the Department.

10 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Chris, Secretary
11 Torres mentioned that there are some contractors, vendors
12 that assist his staff with some of the investigations and
13 so forth. And my question is do the vendors that assist
14 the Department of Aging, do they have the basic training
15 course that --

16 MR. DUBBLE: Yes.

17 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: -- they provide?
18 They're all training up.

19 MR. DUBBLE: They come through the basic training
20 course as well.

21 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Okay. One other
22 question. Is one fraud examiner at Temple enough staff for
23 the amount of financial exploitation cases that you're
24 seeing, that we're seeing in the Commonwealth?

25 MR. DUBBLE: My answer is of course going to be

1 no, but I think it's a great start. And we have had a
2 certified fraud examiner in the past, a woman by the name
3 of Linda Mill, who then left us to go into private
4 industry. We're certainly seeing a lot. We try to --
5 because of that capacity level to try to help the Area
6 Agencies on Aging with the more complex cases.

7 I would say, though, that many of the Area
8 Agencies on Aging and their protective service
9 investigators do have people that enjoy financial cases and
10 do these financial cases. So we really view our role as
11 more of a consulting role to them as opposed to doing
12 cases.

13 But we have data in the past and again on those
14 13 cases I think I said \$4.6 million or \$4.1 million. We
15 are able to show a return on investment by utilizing
16 certified fraud examiners, financial exploitation, to
17 ultimately protect the assets of older adults.

18 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thanks, Chris.

19 Mr. Chairman, if I could, I want to recognize
20 Representative Frank Ryan, who has joined us.

21 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Welcome.
22 Senator Collett?

23 SENATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRWOMAN COLLETT: Thank you,
24 Mr. Chairman.

25 Thank you, Mr. Dubble, for being here today. I

1 just have one question about the increased number of
2 trainings that you're offering. Are you also seeing the
3 Areas on Aging take advantage of those? Are you seeing
4 increased participation and at what level?

5 MR. DUBBLE: Absolutely. By offering more
6 trainings and offering more trainings throughout the State
7 -- I guess that's the other thing I should say. We don't
8 offer just trainings in Harrisburg. We go to Towanda if we
9 need to. We go to all parts of the State, and we try to
10 geographically disperse. But yes, many of our Area
11 Agencies on Aging take advantage of those trainings.

12 Again, I think as has been mentioned a couple
13 times, they need to balance that training needs versus
14 keeping people staffed in the field. That is why we're
15 really focusing on those e-learning modules. I'm a
16 classroom trainer by heart, so it's sometimes tough to
17 convert all of that over to e-learning, but the practical
18 reality is people need -- if they're out on a case and need
19 to know how to look at the back of a check, they don't want
20 to sit through a two-hour webinar or come to a classroom.
21 They need to be able to find that very quickly, and that's
22 what we've been working on with the Department.

23 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative Jim
24 Gregory.

25 REPRESENTATIVE GREGORY: My question's been asked

1 and addressed. Thank you very much.

2 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative
3 DeLissio.

4 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: I'm going to continue
5 the theme of funding. So do you happen to know, Mr.
6 Dubble, is the Department of Aging the sole source of
7 funding for Temple's Institute?

8 MR. DUBBLE: Yes, it is.

9 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: The sole source. And
10 what is that amount in the current fiscal year? Do you
11 happen to know?

12 MR. DUBBLE: Yes. Our funding is \$576,000.

13 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: And I understand that
14 these are, you know, open-ended questions. Is that funding
15 sufficient? We'll go with the benefit of the doubt that
16 what the Institute is doing with the current amount of
17 funding is efficient and hopefully effective. Given this
18 report and what's been identified and how it's been
19 identified, is there a need for -- do you anticipate
20 additional funding in this fiscal year's budget?

21 MR. DUBBLE: We are not asking for any additional
22 funding.

23 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Not. So then the
24 Institute appears to be comfortable that its current
25 funding is achieving its current goals, and those goals are

1 sufficient to support the AAAs?

2 MR. DUBBLE: I would categorize it as our role is
3 within that contract, whatever that contract is, to make
4 sure we are maximizing our capacity. And that's something
5 that, since I have taken over the Institute, we have tried
6 hard not only for training but as well as consultation, as
7 well as supporting the task forces. I think within our
8 next year one of the things that we are trying to really
9 focus on regardless of what that funding amount is is what
10 are those training priorities that come out of this current
11 contract? And is there --

12 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Excuse me.
13 Point of order. I think we'll have plenty of time, but I
14 want to make sure we get everybody to ask questions, so
15 Senator Brooks.

16 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just
17 understanding that the State is so diverse from urban to
18 suburban to rural and you're located in Philadelphia, just
19 how -- can I ask when is the last time that you've traveled
20 or how often are you able to get up to like northwestern
21 Pennsylvania, Potter County or, you know, southwestern
22 Pennsylvania or northeastern Pennsylvania?

23 MR. DUBBLE: Yes. And to be clear, the Institute
24 is here in Harrisburg over in Strawberry Square, so we're
25 right here. We are constantly traveling. We do not look

1 at having a geographic region. We serve all of the 52 AAAs
2 in the 67 counties, so we are constantly traveling
3 throughout.

4 Now, there is always a little bit of economy of
5 scale. In Potter County it can be hard to get from one
6 town to another in an efficient amount of time, so we do
7 need to maximize to where we can get a good class size, but
8 we certainly try to at least get up to State College, if
9 not further north when appropriate for our trainings. But
10 certainly our case consultation, as well as our task force
11 development, is not limited to a geographic region.

12 SENATOR BROOKS: Do you then hold classes in
13 northwestern Pennsylvania?

14 MR. DUBBLE: Certainly in the Erie area,
15 Meadville area, yes.

16 SENATOR BROOKS: Okay. And like Clarion,
17 Clearfield?

18 MR. DUBBLE: Yes. Yes.

19 SENATOR BROOKS: Okay. And then just very
20 quickly, just a comment or a quick question. So much has
21 been asked about financial exploitation, and we're focusing
22 more on the AAAs. My question is to you. Are you working
23 with other departments about financial exploitation as far
24 as calls that our seniors receive on the phone? I think
25 that is so much more far-reaching and millions of dollars.

1 And I know in my district I've had people lose thousands
2 and thousands of dollars. And we've contacted other
3 departments, and I've yet to hear of one solution that they
4 have found.

5 So I think as we all talk about the AAAs and
6 financial exploitation, I think there's another segment
7 that we're really missing and focusing on. Thank you very
8 much.

9 MR. DUBBLE: Yes, thank you.

10 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: [inaudible].

11 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: I'm just confused because
12 I asked earlier if the trainings that were developed were
13 required, and then the question a Senator asked is are they
14 taking advantage of it. So, again, are these additional
15 trainings that have been developed -- they must be required
16 for some people and optional for others, so maybe you can
17 clear that up for me?

18 MR. DUBBLE: And, I'm sorry, I may have
19 misunderstood the original question. There is a regulatory
20 requirement to have enrichment training every year. We
21 have made additional trainings to that that the Area
22 Agencies on Aging often go above and beyond that
23 requirement to get additional training.

24 REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS: Okay. Thank you. Sorry.

25 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: [inaudible].

1 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: First of all, thank you
2 very much. And just a quick question. In my prior life I
3 am a CPA and I do a great deal of fraud investigations.
4 From your experience with the training modules as we follow
5 up on the Senator's and Representative Thomas' question,
6 are there proficiency exams required at the end, and what
7 are the requirements should someone not meet the minimum
8 standard?

9 MR. DUBBLE: Currently, for our protective
10 service investigator's training, what we do at the basic
11 level is we do a knowledge evaluation. That knowledge
12 evaluation is scored and then given feedback to the
13 supervisors to follow up with their protective service
14 investigators.

15 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: Financial crimes are
16 actually fairly complicated, I mean, so I do --

17 MR. DUBBLE: Absolutely.

18 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: And with the level of
19 expertise, it kind of goes into the funding issue, level of
20 expertise. Someone who's a certified fraud examiner versus
21 someone who might be assisting seniors, do we run the risk
22 that because senior -- and I am one; I probably didn't need
23 to tell you that -- but that sometimes we may not be
24 completely aware what a financial crime is? Do we need to
25 also perhaps educate seniors about what to be on the

1 lookout for? And then concurrent with that how do we deal
2 with -- here's my fear. If we make this thing so
3 complicated, we'll get people who say, you know what, I'm
4 not going to get involved in this at all and seniors will
5 get no help.

6 MR. DUBBLE: Yes, and I think that has been --
7 that's an ongoing effort. I'm a social worker for reason.
8 My math skills weren't that great. And so if I come into
9 protective services and I'm working -- and that is kind of
10 our overall call for more training. We really expect these
11 protective service investigators to be mini-accountants, to
12 be mini-therapists, to be mini-medical evaluators. That's
13 the need for comprehensive training, but I think to your
14 point, training that is simplified and concrete so that at
15 least I know when I need to go get some more help, more
16 advanced help.

17 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: No last
18 questions then? Okay. Thank you for your testimony.

19 MR. DUBBLE: All right. Thank you.

20 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: I appreciate
21 your time.

22 Up next, we have Pennsylvania Association of Area
23 Agencies on Aging. I'll let you introduce yourselves and
24 decide which order you proceed in. Thank you.

25 MR. REED: All right, thank you. Distinguished

1 Chairs and Members of the Committees, thank you for having
2 me here. My name is J.R. Reed. I'm the Executive Director
3 for Lehigh County Office of Aging and Adult Services. I
4 started working in 1999 at Centre County Office of Aging as
5 a caseworker. There I spent several years as a Protective
6 Service Investigator, five years as a Protective Service
7 Supervisor, and then was promoted to the Executive Director
8 there. Two and a half years ago I moved to Lehigh County
9 as the Executive Director there, and I currently provide a
10 protective service supervision and backup role to my
11 supervisor. And then recently I have assumed the
12 responsibilities as the Chairperson of Pennsylvania
13 Association of Area Agencies on Aging Protective Services
14 and Guardianship Committee.

15 Since the implementation of Older Adult
16 Protective Services Act -- I'll call it OPSA -- in 1988,
17 AAAs have had the responsibility to receive reports of need
18 on abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, and abandonment,
19 and we also do the investigations that go along with them
20 for those that are 60 and over. We also provide a variety
21 of services through the AAA, and all those services go
22 towards the prevention of elder abuse, and that would be my
23 proposal. We do them in the least-restrictive means. We
24 also are very cognizant of protecting the older adults'
25 rights to self-determination.

1 So thank you for this opportunity to come before
2 you to present our comments and answer questions related to
3 OPSA and the results of the Office of State Inspector
4 General's report.

5 So the overall report in my opinion shows that
6 there are definitely issues with the OPSA the law and the
7 delivery of OPSA in Pennsylvania. But these issues need to
8 be -- and this is a very vulnerable population, so we need
9 to address these issues. But they are very complex. They
10 are not simple, and they are going to take a multipronged
11 approach to really bring a solution to the problems that
12 have been brought up.

13 In an effort to address the various aspects in
14 this report, I feel that it would have been beneficial as
15 part of the investigation to interview current protective
16 service staff, investigators, supervisors, and management
17 staff from AAAs. Their input would have been valuable to
18 add to the other information that was gathered during the
19 investigation in order to provide a full global picture of
20 how OPSA is operationally completed at the local level.
21 You can't really come up with a solution unless you have
22 all the pieces to the puzzle in my opinion.

23 So with a couple of the findings that were
24 pointed out earlier, finding number one, there seems to be
25 confusion surrounding the regulations that govern OPSA. In

1 finding number one, it references OPISA law requiring a
2 face-to-face interview on all cases within 72 hours. The
3 OPISA regulation does not say that. The OPISA regulation
4 says that it depends on the categorization. If somebody's
5 categorized as a nonpriority that they are to have a face-
6 to-face interview during the investigation, not within a
7 72-hour time frame. So the statistics here are not
8 accurate compared to regulation.

9 It requires a face-to-face visit one time during
10 the investigation, and a nonpriority as I mentioned, which
11 encompasses a majority of cases, too. Most of our cases
12 during this period of time there were 11,371 nonpriority
13 cases of the 18,000 cases that were looked at, so, again,
14 I'm not sure on the statistics here because of that factor
15 that was not looked into or understood in the regulations
16 when they were doing this investigation.

17 Finding number two talks about the OPISA law
18 requiring a determination within 20 days. The OPISA
19 regulation actually defines that under abuse and neglect
20 investigations. Those are to be done with reasonable
21 efforts within 20 days. The other one is financial
22 exploitation and abandonment. They do not define a 20-day
23 time frame.

24 So it requires all reasonable efforts to finish
25 an investigation within 20 days on abuse and neglect cases.

1 The OSIG investigation looked at all OPSA cases, including
2 financial exploitation, provided statistics from those
3 investigations. Financial exploitation cases take much
4 longer to complete because of obtaining financial records
5 from various outside entities, which subjects the case to
6 the timeliness of outside entities providing records.

7 These discrepancies don't account for all the
8 issues pointed out in the OSIG report. As I mentioned
9 before, these statistics are high and indicate that there
10 are issues with the delivery of the services. I also
11 believe two things need to be considered: the database
12 collecting the necessary information needs to be updated so
13 that it will be easily read and accessed, and the
14 regulations should be uniform and clear in some instances.
15 The database needs to be updated to collect more data
16 points and better statistics. There needs to be a quicker
17 way to capture when cases are over 20 days and the reason
18 why. Currently, that is captured in a journal note that
19 can only be hand-counted at this point in time. That's
20 another factor that you've got to consider in this whole
21 investigation.

22 So the following things have done by the
23 Protective Services and Guardianship Committee before the
24 report came -- before we were aware of it and after we were
25 aware of it. We were collaborating together with AAAs and

1 we formed multiple subgroups and work committees to try to
2 address some of the things to make OPSA delivery in
3 Pennsylvania much better.

4 We currently have an OPSA review group of the
5 legislative part, so we know that there's pending bills for
6 rewrite of the OPSA law. We have a current group that's
7 looking at definitions, looking at regulations, looking at
8 the law and making some comments and some ideas on how we
9 need to better write this law because it has been since
10 1988 since it's written, and we're in a much different time
11 period now.

12 We have a documentation work group that's looking
13 at best standards and practices and trying to update that
14 for the whole entire network. We have a training review
15 committee on -- the Secretary of Aging mentioned that we're
16 piloting piloting five -- there are six AAAs that are
17 piloting a new intake worker training that was developed by
18 Temple and Pennsylvania Department of Aging. We had a
19 categorization workgroup which provided feedback on the
20 known needs that the Secretary and Denise Getgen mentioned.

21 Just to put a statistic out there, we felt that
22 50 percent of the overturns that we've seen that we
23 reviewed as this categorization network, we didn't agree
24 with those 50 percent as AAA, and we had experienced staff
25 in that room. We had AAA Directors much like myself that

1 had extensive experience in that, and that's one of the
2 things that we came up in our other review. And we gave
3 that feedback to the Department of Aging, and gave that
4 feedback to the AAAs. There was also information we needed
5 to provide to our colleagues in the field.

6 We have a policy subcommittee review group that's
7 pending review. It's pending policies and things that
8 Department of Aging brings out. We vet them for them and
9 we make suggestions to them.

10 We also have a mentorship program that we just
11 began with some of the AAAs that are struggling or have new
12 staff or new protective service supervisor staff. We are
13 trying to match them up with experts in the field that have
14 much more experience to try to help navigate through all
15 the complications to delivering this kind of system.

16 So Protective Services and Guardianship Committee
17 also is collaboratively working with the Pennsylvania
18 Department of Aging. The Secretary of Aging mentioned we
19 do two-week meetings with them right now. We're trying to
20 develop a work plan. We've updated the intake work form,
21 and we're working on trying to get that better. We're
22 working on plans on updating the protective services
23 investigative form. I mentioned the training already, and
24 we also are working on our database.

25 We are trying to get more streamlined data, get

1 better data points into it, collect the data so when
2 investigations are done it can collect it easily and not
3 have to hand-count different parts to it, plus also
4 streamline it for our workers as they have to put it into
5 the system so we're not bogging them down with putting data
6 documentation in when they should be out face-to-face
7 working with clients and working with their families.

8 The complexity of cases has drastically increased
9 over the past several years. When I first started, many of
10 the protective service cases were focused on the question
11 of could an older adult care for themselves or could their
12 family care for them? The older adult could be in crisis
13 caused by a medical issue experienced by their spouse. The
14 older adult couldn't care for themselves and now have no
15 other supports. Protective services would assist with
16 running these situations.

17 Now, it seems most cases have different twists to
18 them. We end up dealing with an older adult and their
19 family members who might have mental health issues, drug
20 and alcohol addiction issues and other varying problems.
21 Let me talk to about a case that we encountered when I
22 worked in the field. We had an older adult. She was like
23 in her late 70s. Her husband had passed away 10 years
24 previous to our encounter with her. In that time she never
25 took care of her finances, so her husband had done that

1 previous. She had a local son and a grandson that would
2 take care of her finances, come over and cut her grass,
3 make sure she got groceries, and things of that nature.

4 Well, as time progressed, she had dementia and it
5 progressed to the point where she couldn't do a lot of the
6 things herself any longer. So a daughter moved into her
7 home. The daughter brought her grandson and his children
8 and his wife into the home. The grandson unfortunately was
9 a heroin addict and had previous problems with law
10 enforcement.

11 So we got a call that she was being exploited.
12 We pulled bank records, and there were \$500 of cash every
13 day going out of that account. Multiple thousands of
14 dollars were being taken from this older adult. Now, the
15 complexity to the situation was is if you remove the
16 daughter and the grandson who is doing the exploitation,
17 she would no longer have caregivers in the community, and
18 therefore, she might have to end up in a facility.

19 So we took extensive amount of time with our
20 protective service solicitor and sat down and developed a
21 care plan with the families, try to say, okay, you do the
22 care, the son that was in the community, he takes care of
23 the money, and we'd compensate people like you should be, I
24 mean, fairly. Instead of \$500 a day, a lot less than that.

25 And so over time what ended up happening is this

1 daughter and her grandson, they left. They vacated the
2 house quickly because after the money was shut off, they no
3 longer had access. They left. So the son fortunately was
4 able to rally and get his sister to come in and stay with
5 the older adult, and she was able to stay in the community
6 for some time. But that was a very complex situation, very
7 real, took many hours of my time, many hours of my staff's
8 time, and a solicitor to try to remedy that situation.

9 There have been dramatic increases in the number
10 of reports of elder abuse and investigations over the past
11 several years. This is due overwhelming number of
12 Pennsylvanians reaching age 60 and longer in their
13 lifespan. One of the fastest-growing populations is those
14 85 and older, and statistically, one in two of them have
15 some type of dimension. So with that being known and those
16 statistics sitting before us and them growing every day,
17 this problem isn't just going to -- we're seeing problems
18 right now. There are greater problems coming if we don't
19 get ahead of this because of the sheer statistics that are
20 coming before us.

21 It is vital that we have a thoughtful, insightful
22 plan be put in place to address the current concerns in the
23 growth in numbers of older adults in Pennsylvania. The
24 current growth pattern is showing the number of reports
25 will double in approximately five years at our current

1 pace, and if we're having issues now because -- and I'm
2 saying most of the issues surrounding this has to do with
3 staffing because this is a very hard service. This is
4 isn't like I'm helping somebody get a bath in their home.
5 This has to do with staffing. I have to have staffing to
6 investigate. It isn't like a flashy kind of service
7 because a lot of times older adults, you know, they want
8 that service that comes in, a meal or something of that
9 nature. This I have to provide staff to do the
10 investigative work.

11 So with that being shown, in five years we're
12 going to double our statistics, so we need to have an
13 overall extensive plan that's going to help us navigate
14 through this and get ahead of this and make sure that our
15 older adults are served correctly in Pennsylvania.

16 It is important to take into account that AAAs
17 employ thousands of staff who are very dedicated to
18 providing protective services in a high-quality means. We
19 carefully balance maintaining the rights and dignity of
20 seniors and making sure that they are protected from abuse,
21 neglect, financial exploitation, and abandonment.

22 This investigation only highlighted a few
23 failings, but there are so many examples of good things
24 that are accomplished by protective service workers. Our
25 network acknowledges that we should endeavor to do better

1 and improve our performance. We accept these findings and
2 view them as an opportunity to review current practices and
3 identify improvements to the delivery of these services to
4 older Pennsylvanians.

5 Thank you in summary for having me come and
6 testify before you. I'll turn it over now to my colleague
7 Krista.

8 MS. GEER: Good afternoon I believe it is now.

9 Distinguished Chairs and Members of the
10 Committees, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you
11 today.

12 My name is Krista Geer. I am the Executive
13 Director for Active Aging, which is the Area Agency on
14 Aging in Crawford County. And I am also the current
15 President of P4A.

16 I'd like to start by saying I appreciate the work
17 the OSIG put into this report and the opportunities that
18 have come from it. P4A and the Area Agencies on Aging have
19 been working with the Department of Aging closely to
20 address some longstanding issues since its release. We've
21 been meeting every other week and are spending a lot of
22 time working through a thorough list of recommendations
23 that come not only from this report but also directly from
24 the network of AAAs do this work on a daily basis.

25 Those recommendations are substantial, and they

1 include the need to revamp our current report-of-need form,
2 update the software program our staff use while in the
3 field to improve efficiencies and eliminate redundancies,
4 as well as technical support on the most complicated
5 investigations related to financial exploitation.

6 I know these recommendations are different from
7 what you read in the Inspector General's report. That's
8 because the report focuses on the oversight of protective
9 services, and we are focusing on the provision of
10 protective services. For example, the report recommends
11 that the Department of Aging add additional staff and
12 resources to oversee and monitor the Area Agencies on Aging
13 and that the Department increase the training requirements
14 for our staff. Those are fair and reasonable
15 recommendations. Our staff should be adequately trained,
16 and our agency should be held accountable.

17 But what the report doesn't tell you is that
18 additional resources for training and oversight will not
19 begin to address the root causes of these issues. These
20 are symptoms of a larger problem. If adequate resources
21 are not provided to our boots-on-the-ground staff who
22 receive and investigate these reports, no amount of
23 training or oversight will ever resolve the issues.

24 PDA's annual report will tell you that between
25 fiscal year '13-'14 and '17-'18 the number of reports of

1 need across the Commonwealth have increased 57 percent, and
2 the number of investigations have increased 53 percent.

3 When I was preparing my testimony, I did a little research
4 into you, the audience, to determine what areas you came
5 from, and so attached to my written testimony you'll find a
6 table that includes the corresponding increases for the
7 counties that you all serve. Twenty counties show an
8 average increase of 166 percent during this time.

9 I'm sure you're wondering why our numbers are so
10 much higher than those shown by the Department's annual
11 report. That's because I included the number of APS or
12 under 60 reports of need that our agencies are required to
13 take, record electronically, and then pass on to the DHS
14 contractor for those services. I include them because they
15 take time and resources.

16 Until this fiscal year, our agencies have
17 absorbed these increases in reports of need and
18 investigations without any additional resources to allow us
19 to hire additional staff. Last year's budget included \$2.1
20 million additional dollars specifically designated to
21 protective services, and this year's proposed budget raises
22 that to \$5 million. That's a great start, and we
23 appreciate both the Governor's and the Legislature's
24 efforts on that.

25 But when you consider that \$5 million being

1 spread across 52 AAAs, you have to acknowledge it will be
2 spread pretty thin. Just quick math will tell you that an
3 even spread would only provide roughly \$96,000 per agency.
4 And if you spread it out according to population or any
5 other factor, there will be likely areas that receive no
6 funding to address a growing issue that affects us all.
7 And of course my math assumes that the Department will not
8 be using any of that funding to address their own needs.
9 Our full request is for \$8 million, which is the amount
10 requested by the AAAs in our 2018 survey. If there are
11 changes to legislation and other requirements, the amount
12 needed will grow.

13 And I'd also like to clarify that these
14 investigations are not simple. Our staff are often charged
15 with delving into longstanding, often dysfunctional family
16 dynamics, highly sensitive and complicated issues, and
17 complex financial labyrinths. They must do all of this
18 while ensuring that the rights of the older adult are not
19 compromised and that they are provided what they need in a
20 manner that supports the dignity, respect, and preference
21 of the older adult in the least-restrictive setting.

22 So what does that all mean? It means that older
23 adults are not automatically incapable of making decisions
24 the day they turn 60. As I said, I did a little research,
25 and there are a few Committee Members who are over the age

1 of 60, and according to our law, older adults. And while
2 I'm not going to point any of you out, clearly, you are
3 intelligent, capable adults who handle complex issues and
4 situations.

5 As adults capable of understanding and accepting
6 consequences of their actions, we have no right to force an
7 older adult to do anything. They have the right just like
8 the rest of us to make bad decisions. Our job is to
9 determine if they have the capacity to understand and
10 accept the consequences of their actions before infringing
11 upon their lives with any intervening actions. Making that
12 determination often involves doctors and psychiatrists, as
13 well as others.

14 And I'd like to tell you about a situation we
15 encountered with an older adult in our county several years
16 ago. We received a call from our local municipal police
17 department, as we frequently do, asking us to work with an
18 older adult who would gotten herself into trouble. Our
19 police don't want to rush into an older adult's home and
20 placed them under arrest if they can help it, and so
21 sometimes they call us for some assistance.

22 It seems this particular woman had written a very
23 large bad check for a piece of jewelry, and we were asked
24 to go see her and find out if the check was just a banking
25 error or if she would be willing to return the jewelry.

1 Now, let me be clear. This was never a report of need at
2 first but rather a request for assistance.

3 When we first interacted with the woman, she
4 would only speak to us through a crack in the door, and she
5 made a logical excuse for the bad check and she readily
6 handed over the jewelry. Our staff returned the jewelry to
7 the police, and we could've easily never encountered this
8 woman again. But our investigator felt that something just
9 wasn't right. The woman wouldn't open the door, she seemed
10 overly guarded, so over the course of the next several
11 weeks, our investigator worked diligently to gain
12 information while also gaining the woman's trust she could
13 determine if everything was truly okay. She spoke to a
14 handyman who came around and learned that this woman had
15 been a local schoolteacher her entire life, she had a niece
16 and community members often pay bills for her because they
17 were going unpaid.

18 One day the woman actually opened the door and
19 allowed our investigator into the home to talk to her. The
20 hope was that we could take a look around, decide
21 everything was okay, and move on, but that didn't happen.
22 Once inside the house, our investigator learned that this
23 woman suffered from delusions. She was talking to people
24 who were not there and insisted that her niece was dead and
25 the person calling her was an imposter. She was convinced

1 a wealthy famous family was going to give her a substantial
2 amount of money, yet at the same time she could talk very
3 logically about current events and life circumstances.

4 So we decided we needed professional help, and we
5 petitioned the court to have the woman evaluated by a
6 geriatric psychiatrist. The day she was to go for her
7 evaluation, we had to have the police break into her home
8 and force her to go. She was not at all cooperative. We
9 learned through this process that her executive functioning
10 was completely eroded and a guardian was needed to help
11 handle her affairs. So we worked closely with the niece to
12 petition for guardianship and again had to break into the
13 woman's home to force her to attend her own hearing.

14 When she walked in and saw her niece, she was
15 elated to learn that her niece really was alive, but she
16 was also very angry. As our investigator and I walked past
17 her into the courtroom, she looked at our investigator and
18 said, "I hate you. Don't ever come near me again."

19 Despite her deficiencies, she knew that we were there that
20 day to take away her rights. We do not take lightly the
21 implications of stripping an individual of the right to
22 self-determination, nor should we.

23 Crawford County is just a midsize county in
24 northwest Pennsylvania. The reports of need in our area
25 have increased 97 percent since fiscal year '13-'14, and

1 our investigations have increased 62 percent. We've
2 absorbed this increase without additional staff and while
3 still maintaining our green status through the monitoring
4 from PDA.

5 This increase in the number of investigations is
6 significant. The majority of the time spent in the
7 provision of protective services is spent doing an
8 investigation. Our investigators must work through
9 multiple sometimes conflicting perceptions and details to
10 determine what steps if any our agency can take to mitigate
11 risk, all while keeping the older adults safe in a manner
12 that maintains their dignity and allows them the right to
13 determine whenever possible what's best for themselves.
14 Investigators have to seek information from collateral
15 contacts, and those contacts often include physicians and
16 bank staff who have records that are vital to our
17 investigation. Obtaining those documents can take over
18 three weeks, already putting our investigation past 20
19 days.

20 When the additional \$2.1 million was provided
21 last budget cycle, we had no assurances that it would be
22 ongoing funding, and so we knew the most we could hope for
23 in our particular county was \$38,000, which isn't enough to
24 hire anyone. So we contracted a forensic accountant that
25 could assist our staff with the financial exploitation

1 cases.

2 Now, please keep in mind that protective services
3 is only one program we administer, and every program is
4 experiencing a significant growth as our aging population
5 explodes. The need for home-delivered meals, personal care
6 services, and emergency response devices has increased
7 along the same levels as protective services in the last
8 several years.

9 And your Area Agency on Aging administrators are
10 faced with really decisions every day that quite simply
11 come down to do we provide someone with a meal or do we
12 create a waiting list of people who need to eat so that we
13 can have more staff doing investigations? Those decisions
14 are taking a toll.

15 There are no more rabbits in our hats, no more
16 tricks in our bags. Our resources are stretched as far as
17 they can go, and our system is at a crisis point. The
18 number of seniors in our Commonwealth is growing rapidly.
19 Their needs are expanding just as rapidly, yet resources
20 for the network charged with ensuring their safety has been
21 largely stagnant for the better part of a decade, and this
22 is the result.

23 I'd like to make one final point. I know when
24 reports such as this are released, it's easy to assume that
25 the problems that exist are because there are employees who

1 do not care. That's not the case. While I'm sure there
2 are a few, please don't paint them all with the same brush.
3 My earlier story about the woman who told our investigator
4 she hated her, I saw how much that hurt her. And our
5 investigator isn't a soft woman. She's actually a Navy
6 veteran, and she's pretty tough, but that doesn't mean it
7 makes the very hard job they do every day easy. It
8 doesn't. The work they do is exceedingly difficult, and
9 they can do 100 things right in the course of a day and no
10 one will ever notice until they make that one mistake.

11 Pennsylvania's older adults deserve a
12 comprehensive approach to addressing their needs. The work
13 done by our AAAs can delay or eliminate the need for more
14 expensive services like Medicaid long-term care and also
15 serve as a way to keep older adults safe.

16 Such services relieve the burden on caregivers,
17 function as an early warning system that someone is in
18 need, and keep people in their homes longer, which is where
19 we all want to be. This can't be done without adequate
20 support to the safety net. It's time we demonstrate our
21 commitment to older Pennsylvanians and strengthen the
22 system charged with serving them.

23 Thank you.

24 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thank you, Krista.

25 Thank you, J.R. A quick question, Krista --

1 MS. GEER: Yes.

2 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: -- or I think it
3 will be a quick question. You mentioned in your testimony
4 about adequate resources not being provided to our boots on
5 the ground. What kind of resources do you refer to,
6 training, staff, technology, funding?

7 MS. GEER: Yes.

8 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: I mean, can you be
9 specific?

10 MS. GEER: Yes. All of those actually.
11 Additional training would be helpful. Some of the training
12 that we receive -- and I know that there was some comments
13 about the fact that, you know, reports of need aren't
14 always classified right. I've been through protective
15 services training, and I've had training on classification
16 exactly one time. You have that your initial training, and
17 you don't have that again. Those kind of things need to be
18 reiterated over time. That's what helps them stick with
19 us.

20 As I said, our reports of need in Crawford County
21 have increased 97 percent. That would mean I need at least
22 one if not two additional staff people to be able to
23 address that need, and I haven't been able to do that.

24 The software absolutely could be upgraded to
25 allow us to be quicker, more efficient with the time that

1 they spend entering the data because the data is very
2 important, but a lot of times they're dealing with the
3 individual in front of them as opposed to what needs to go
4 into the computer.

5 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: This mission was
6 seem to be very labor-intensive, which would necessitate
7 additional boots on the ground. Am I correct?

8 MS. GEER: You're absolutely correct.

9 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Is there a high
10 turnover for protective services professionals?

11 MS. GEER: I believe there probably is. That's a
12 hard thing for me to answer because our agency does not
13 have it. We have a very good support system. But as J.R.
14 mentioned, we've recently put in a mentor program for P.S.
15 supervisors so that they have someone who is doing the
16 exact same work they are doing that they can reach out to
17 for support.

18 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Thank you.

19 MS. GEER: Thank you.

20 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Mr. Chairman.

21 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Just quickly,
22 we're running short on time, what access do your members
23 have to medical support and nurses, and how do the medical
24 consultation services work? I'm a little unclear on that.

25 MR. REED: Sure. I know there's statements in

1 the report about APS. My understanding is APS does not
2 have the supports that are in this report, too, just number
3 one. Number two, we have nurses on my staff, so if my
4 protective service workers go out and we feel or the
5 supervisor feels that there needs to be a clinical nurse to
6 look at that, we will wrap around to that nurse. Often
7 other times they'll look to home health agencies that are
8 in there under insurances to do that, and a lot of agencies
9 also do contracting with a medical doctor at times, and
10 they may use that, utilize that, too, or the hospital or
11 other varying ways.

12 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: Mr. Chairman, in the
13 interest of time, if the testifiers would be willing, I'd
14 like to ask a series of questions if they could perhaps
15 respond at a later date because it could be fairly
16 complicated, but I think they're germane if they would be
17 so willing.

18 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: [inaudible].

19 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: I think there's a fairly
20 significant issue with the banking industry that could
21 affect it. I could be very quick in the question, but the
22 answer might take a while.

23 The first question would be like in Lebanon
24 County we've spent a tremendous amount of time with
25 advocacy groups on aging issues since I've been on the

1 Committee for a number of years, so part of the reason for
2 our increase is we've gone together to all of the senior
3 centers in our area to help people be aware.

4 So the first question I would ask you is what's
5 the magnitude you believe of underreporting that exists
6 throughout the State, number one?

7 The second issue is have you ever considered or
8 have we considered tying in the suspicious activity report
9 or SAR reporting system in the banking industry and the
10 Federal Reserve and the FDIC to where we have software --
11 I'm a former CFO of a bank. We have software that can
12 identify trends for people of a certain age that are
13 spending patterns different than we would normally expect
14 people to have.

15 The third issue is that with the asset transfers
16 that are typically taking place in anticipation of death
17 under States, it's been increased from three to five years.
18 Do you and the Area Agency on Aging believe that you need
19 to increase that time period?

20 And then the fourth and final issue is do the
21 estate tax laws in some way contribute to seniors being
22 encouraged to transfer assets that then may in fact create
23 more to the financial exploitation?

24 That's it, sir.

25 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Good. Maybe,

1 Representative Ryan, you could submit those questions in
2 writing to them and they can get it back to the Committee,
3 and then that would --

4 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: I would be honored to do
5 that.

6 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: -- and then
7 that would --

8 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: Erin, may I get this to
9 you.

10 MS. RAUB: Yes, Representative Ryan, I can
11 address a few of those things. The SAR reporting, you are
12 correct that it is a Federal requirement that they actually
13 report it to the Federal Government. Part of Chairman
14 Hennessey's OPSA bill will include some type of
15 communication where we're trying to receive it in the
16 States and who the proper agency is to receive the
17 suspicious activity reports.

18 As far as the asset transfer, I believe you're
19 talking about the Medicaid look-back?

20 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: [inaudible].

21 MS. RAUB: Oh, estate taxes, okay.

22 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: It's a Medicaid look-back,
23 but it's also an estate tax issue as well --

24 MS. RAUB: Right.

25 REPRESENTATIVE RYAN: -- for Federal income tax

1 purposes and estate tax also.

2 MS. RAUB: Yes, the Medicaid look-back obviously
3 is Federal and that changed from three to five about 13
4 years ago, and that would be something that would have to
5 change on the Federal level through CMS.

6 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Okay. Senator
7 Brooks.

8 SENATOR BROOKS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just
9 again, can you tell us how many Pennsylvanians are served
10 by the Area Agencies on Aging?

11 MS. GEER: I'm not even sure I could tell you
12 that number. Across the entire Commonwealth I can't
13 encompass that number myself, but I can get it for you.

14 SENATOR BROOKS: Okay. Thank you --

15 MS. GEER: Yes, sorry.

16 SENATOR BROOKS: -- very much. And then I just
17 wanted to thank you for your comments. In talking about
18 the fine line of protecting our seniors but also respecting
19 their decisions and their privacy, I know that it's been
20 bantered around down here that if there are -- you know, if
21 a family member selects someone to take care of their
22 financials, that they have to have training and be
23 approved, and I think that's just crossing the line, that
24 people can make their own personal decisions. And, you
25 know, we have to be careful not to intrude on that.

1 But if you could get me the number of seniors
2 that our AAAs serve, I would appreciate that. Thank you.

3 MS. GEER: Thank you.

4 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Representative
5 DeLissio.

6 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Really quick. Thank
7 you for your testimony. Is there also efforts as you work
8 diligently and hard and persistently to deal with
9 protecting our seniors, are the AAAs responsible for
10 educating consumers against what is becoming -- comes
11 through cell phones, comes through -- I mean, my aunt
12 passed away at 99 this summer, and her last purchase in
13 June was a Chromebook because her laptop had died, so we
14 can't make assumptions about certainly older folks and how
15 they get information. Hooked into everything is everybody
16 else.

17 So is there any focus or effort -- and I know
18 resources are very, extremely limited and barely sufficient
19 or insufficient I'll say to do the jobs you're already
20 tasked with. But is there any discussion about education?

21 MS. GEER: We do a lot of education specifically
22 through our elder abuse task forces, so we distribute
23 information on a lot of those fraudulent activities that
24 you're referencing. And just in our county and some of the
25 less expensive and broader-reach areas, we work with our

1 local municipal police departments to receive the
2 information. If someone comes into any of our police
3 departments and says I got a call from someone trying to
4 get me to do this or do that, we instantly put out a
5 Facebook blast that goes around the entire county so that
6 other people see that before it hits them as well.

7 Now, I know that's probably not as expansive as
8 what we should be doing, but I can tell you that those
9 things get more shares than anything else we put on because
10 more older adults are on Facebook now than they were in the
11 past. So we're just trying to find different ways like
12 that that are cost-effective.

13 MR. REED: And --

14 REPRESENTATIVE DELISSIO: Thank you.

15 MR. REED: And just to go along with what Krista
16 is saying is a lot of senior centers, we do that kind of
17 education at senior centers so the Attorney General's
18 Office actually has people that will go out and talk about
19 fraud and scams and different things. And we've had in
20 Lehigh County them come out to each of our senior centers
21 to present on that because, you're right, that's a huge
22 issue.

23 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: Any additional
24 questions? Mr. Chairman, do you want to say anything?

25 HOUSE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN MURT: Just thank you to

1 all of our testifiers. Thank you to all of the
2 stakeholders. I was just talking to Erin. We do have a
3 couple ideas legislatively that we'll be pursuing in the
4 near future. And also thank you to the Members for their
5 great questions.

6 And this is a content area where I'm not an
7 expert, and every time that we discuss these issues, I feel
8 like certainly it's an area that we need to address and
9 learn more about, so thank you very much.

10 Mr. Chairman?

11 SENATE MAJORITY CHAIRMAN DISANTO: I won't repeat
12 Chairman Murt's comments, but thank you for your testimony.
13 Thank everybody for their other testimony and our guests
14 here and reporters. I hope it was informational.

15 And this joint Committee now stands adjourned.
16 Thank you.

17

18 (The hearing concluded at 1:00 p.m.)

1 I hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings
2 are a true and accurate transcription produced from audio
3 on the said proceedings and that this is a correct
4 transcript of the same.

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