

Stable Families



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VISION

The community respects and supports families, recognizing that family composition in a diverse society is varied. Family members have healthy relationships with each other. Families nurture their members and provide a sense of well-being and safety. Family members work together and feel that they also belong to something larger than themselves.

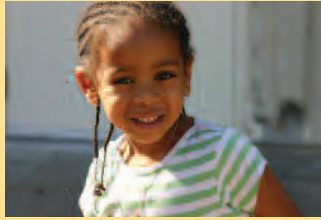
STABLE FAMILIES OUTCOME TEAM REPORT

The Stable Families Outcome Team has maintained attention on various forms of family violence. Domestic violence (i.e., intimate partner violence) has been a focus area since the Team's inception in December 2005. Most recently, significant energy has gone into learning more about elder abuse and the potential to impact this issue in Montgomery County.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The *2007 FCFC Progress Report* included the status of recommendations from the Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment completed in 2006. Progress in implementing some of those recommendations continued in 2008:

- ✦ The Police Reporting Process—the forms recommended for use in the protocol, in addition to the standard police reports—was revised and condensed, thus reducing the time it takes officers to complete domestic violence offense paperwork.
- ✦ Guidelines were established in dealing with children at the scene of domestic violence offenses.
- ✦ Police conduct in hospital emergency rooms was incorporated into the domestic violence protocol for law enforcement.
- ✦ The information to be obtained by law enforcement dispatchers was revised to be more specific about weapons use/availability and perpetrator information.
- ✦ A resource manual has been created to assist law enforcement agencies in developing policies and resources for dealing with victims and perpetrators who have Limited English Proficiency.



Some of the recommendations made in the Domestic Violence Safety and Accountability Assessment Report are technical in nature and costly to achieve, thus delaying their implementation. However, efforts are being made on a number of fronts to implement all recommendations as the resources become available to do so.

ELDER ABUSE, NEGLECT AND EXPLOITATION

In 2008, the Family and Community Violence Committee of the Stable Families Outcome Team determined attention should be given to the issues of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Ohio Elder Abuse Task Force Report (2005) noted the challenges in finding a common definition of the problem and the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach in addressing it:

Although elder abuse has no universally accepted definition—its meaning varies among state laws and among researchers—there is widespread agreement that elder abuse is a complex and serious problem in Ohio. It has a serious and devastating effect on growing numbers of older citizens and requires immediate, collective action across government agencies and professional disciplines.

Adult Protective Services (APS) in each county is mandated by Ohio law to act in

a short-term capacity to stabilize situations deemed harmful or threatening to adults 60 years of age or older. Cases fall within the following categories:

- ✦ Abuse—sexual, physical and mental maltreatment by another person
- ✦ Neglect—other person not providing appropriate care
- ✦ Self-Neglect—most cases are medical and caused by diminished capacity to care for oneself
- ✦ Exploitation—unlawful use of financial resources by another

In Montgomery County during 2007, Adult Protective Services investigated a total of 1,315 referrals which were categorized as follows:

✦ Abuse	9%
✦ Neglect by another	13%
✦ Self-neglect	63%
✦ Exploitation	15%

It is estimated that only ten percent (10%) of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation situations are reported for investigation. Even when it is available to

them, not all people want help or involvement from APS. Adults have the right to refuse services. This can result in little or no action being taken; as an example, the elderly person might fear retaliation.

As the number of older adults increases, so too will the number of elderly experiencing abuse or neglect.



Some counties in Ohio are educating their communities about elder abuse, neglect and exploitation and attempting to find solutions to prevent and address these situations. Greater community awareness in Montgomery County is needed about the signs of elder abuse and neglect, especially self-neglect, in order for early detection and inter-

vention to occur. The more recognizable an elder neglect or abuse situation, the more likely a report can be made and assistance offered.

Activities being considered for possible action in Montgomery County include the development of an investigative protocol, community education about the issues, and legislative advocacy.

An investigative protocol spells out what role each professional discipline plays in the investigation and, when appropriate, prosecution of elder maltreatment. Development of the protocol is used to improve communication across disciplines and to identify where resources should be added or expanded.

Legislative advocacy on behalf of abused, neglected and exploited older adults is taking place in Columbus and in Washington, D.C. State legislation is being advocated by the Ohio Coalition of Adult Protective Services to increase Ohio's funding of adult protective services beyond the current total of \$500,000 for all 88 counties. Federal legislation introduced in the last few years has been intended to research and crack down on

elder abuse. The Elder Abuse Victims Act (not yet passed) would protect seniors by establishing specialized elder abuse prosecution and research programs and activities to aid victims of elder abuse; to provide training to prosecutors and other law enforcement related to elder abuse prevention and protection; and to establish programs that provide for emergency crisis response teams to combat elder abuse.

During 2008, representatives from the Positive Living for Special Populations Outcome Team and various professionals from throughout the community joined the Family and Community Violence Committee in efforts to determine what steps should be taken to address elder abuse.

Outcome Team leading the planning of a Comprehensive Neighborhood Initiative. The neighborhood initiative will be a pilot project to address the root causes of poverty. Three members of the Stable Families Outcome Team are participating in this planning process. More information about the Comprehensive Neighborhood Initiative can be found on pages 51 – 54.

FATHERHOOD

There is extensive information about the consequences of absent fathers and the impact of fathers' involvement on the well-being of children and society. The research is clear: fathers factor significantly in the lives of their children. There is simply no substitute for the love, involvement, and commitment of a responsible father.

Several organizations serving Montgomery County fathers have been working to establish a fatherhood initiative. During 2008, the working group explored funding opportunities for expanding services to fathers who are not living with their child(ren) and who are behind in child support and/or need guidance about how to be nurturing dads. The Stable Families Outcome Team has supported these efforts with a representative and staffing. Although funds were not secured during 2008, the Stable Families Outcome Team remains concerned about this group and plans to identify other actions they can take to support a fatherhood initiative.

POVERTY

The Stable Families Outcome Team's persistent concern about families living in poverty led to continuing discussions that began in 2007 with the Economic Self-Sufficiency Outcome Team about this issue. Those information-sharing sessions have led to a collaboration among all Outcome Teams with the Supportive and Engaged Neighborhoods

