

**THE FLORIDA PUBLIC GUARDIAN PROGRAMS:  
AN EVALUATION OF PROGRAM STATUS AND OUTCOMES**

**Report for the  
Florida Department of Elder Affairs  
Statewide Public Guardianship Office**

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# FLORIDA PUBLIC GUARDIAN PROGRAMS: AN EVALUATION OF PROGRAM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

## *EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

Sections 744.701-744.715 of the Florida Statutes established the Florida Statewide Public Guardianship Office in 1999. The Statewide Public Guardianship Office is administratively housed in the Department of Elder Affairs (a social services agency model of public guardian service delivery), and cover approximately 30% (20/67) of the counties in the state. The Statewide Public Guardianship Office contracts for public guardian services with 15 local not-for-profit programs that utilize a variety of methods of operation (Department of Elder Affairs, 2008). The Statewide Public Guardianship Office also has oversight of Florida's private professional guardians.

The purpose of this study is to study all 15 state public guardian programs in Florida by examining program provider models; characteristics, needs, and outcomes of incapacitated persons (IPs) served; cost savings realized; and allocation of funds by the programs and the Department of Elder Affairs.

### **Program Administration**

The 15 state public guardian programs were serving a total of 2,208 IPs, with each program serving between 10 and 994 IPs at the time of this study. A total of 418 IPs are reported on waiting lists. Some programs have no waiting list because no openings have occurred. Programs have a mix of full-time and part-time staff. Programs report a total of 93 full-time staff and 19 part-time staff members. Eight programs have attorneys either as the program supervisor or as part of the staff.

#### *Program Administration Time*

Programs report an average of 633 general administrative hours per month across all activities. The greatest amount of time is spent on "other" everyday necessities of program administration (e.g., telephone calls, mail, maintaining files, managing the office) (mean = 246 hours). Agency-related travel is the second most time-consuming task (mean = 187 hours), followed by time responding to pager (mean = 86 hours).

#### *Costs of Operating Programs*

For July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, the 15 state public guardian programs report a state allotment of \$2,057,413 in operating expenses. In addition to the state allotment, programs receive additional dollars from other sources such as the United Way, private donations, and monies from their respective county. Seven programs supplemented their state allocation with private donations totaling \$235,875. At least three programs had uncompensated Executive Directors. Within these funding parameters, the average yearly cost of serving an IP was \$2,648, an amount that is consistent with other published costs per year of serving an IP: \$2,857 in Florida in 1983 (Schmidt, Miller, Peters, & Lowenstein, 1988); \$2,662 in Virginia in 1997 (Teaster, Schmidt, Abramson, & Almeida, 1999); and \$2,955 in Virginia in 2002 (Teaster & Roberto, 2003).

**The Florida Public Guardian Programs produced a considerable cost savings to the state, an estimated \$1,883,043 in a year's time.** The programs not only create a substantial cost savings to the state, but also they pay for themselves.

#### *Quality of Life Actions*

Important, intangible cost savings are realized in improving the IPs' quality of life. Across six months, the majority of programs report providing enhancing clients' socialization, emotional support to clients, arranging clients' funerals, and re-establishing clients' relationships with family and friends.

## Characteristics, Needs, and Outcomes of IPs

As of September 1, 2008, the guardians were serving a total of 2,208 IPs. The programs serve as plenary guardian (79.8%), limited guardian (10.8%), and guardian advocate (6.1%).

Slightly over half of IPs are female (52%) and Caucasian (52%). IPs are significantly older than the general population of Florida. There is also a statistically significant difference between the population of IPs and the general population of Florida in annual income, marital status, and level of education. IPs range in age from 19 to 106 years and have an average age of 66 years. Twenty-three percent (23%) of IPs hold a high school diploma, and 4% have a college degree. Over one-third of IPs (41%) have annual incomes below \$5,499. Most IPs live in a skilled nursing facility (59.8%) followed by an assisted living facility (22.7%). Only 6.9% of IPs live in a private residence.

### *Health and Functional Abilities*

Common health conditions of IPs are developmental disability conditions (48%), neurological conditions (43%), and psychiatric conditions (41%). Neurological conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, Alzheimer's disease, other dementias, and epilepsy. Psychiatric conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety. Developmental conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and autism.

The majority of IPs requires assistance with at least one activity of daily living (ADL). The most frequent assistance needed is physical assistance with bathing, followed by dressing. Most IPs are unable to perform instrumental activities of daily living (IADL), including money management (88%), meal preparation (84%), taking medication (79%), laundry (78%), transportation (71%), shopping (62%), and housekeeping (59%). Most (73%) are cognitively disoriented in at least one sphere (i.e., person, time, and place).

## Recommendations

This 2009 evaluation of the Florida public guardian programs during the 2007 – 2008 fiscal year uses a repeatedly published state-of-the art analysis. This evaluation builds on earlier research and provides a model of evaluation for future work. Based on the findings, the following recommendations should enhance program operations and IP outcomes:

- Establish statewide coverage by public guardian programs in order to adequately serve all citizens of Florida. Forty-seven of 67 Florida counties (70%) have no public guardian service, no improved IP quality of life, and no cost savings associated with public guardianship.
- Promulgate program standards of practice as administrative regulations or organize program standards of practice into standard policies and procedures to which all programs should adhere: standardize IP assessment instruments, IP care plans, and time accounting mechanisms as electronic records.
- Increased fiscal support by the State of Florida is critical to the success of the programs and to reducing the substantial costs of not having statewide public guardianship.
- Thoroughly document tangible and intangible cost savings by all programs. The programs produce substantial cost savings to the state—\$1,883,043 for one year. The programs pay for themselves in a single year.
- Programs should provide standardized administrative information (e.g., the administrative profile) at least annually, especially information regarding quality of life improvement and cost savings.
- With input from representatives of all programs, modify the existing State Guardianship Database in order to assure that accurate, comprehensive, and systematic reports of IPs and data on them is maintained and complete. Special attention should be given to design it so that: a) each IP has a unique identifying number to assure accurate reporting by the state and b) avoid as much as possible the “other” category in data fields. The database should automatically generate reports designed to improve the program's efficiency and auditing as well as state reporting.
- Stressed above, efforts should be made to document all cost savings activities as accurately as possible. The centralized database is the ideal place to collect this information. Information should be accurately recorded, be as specific as possible (categories may need to be expanded), and properly dated, with duplicity avoided. “Research should be undertaken to measure successful practices and to examine how the guardianship process is enhancing the well-being of persons with diminished capacity. . . . The research should examine how the system is working” (Wingspan, 2002, p. 597).

# FLORIDA PUBLIC GUARDIAN PROGRAMS: AN EVALUATION OF PROGRAM STATUS AND OUTCOMES

## INTRODUCTION

Public guardianship refers to the appointment and responsibility of a public official or publicly funded entity to serve as a legal guardian in the absence of willing and responsible family members and friends to serve, or without resources to employ a private guardian (Schmidt, Miller, Bell, & New, 1981). In January 2008, the report of the first national study of public guardianship in 25 years was published (Teaster, Wood, Schmidt, & Lawrence, 2008). The study found that nearly all programs are inadequately staffed and funded, that personnel are undertrained and undercompensated, that data collection systems are limited and often poorly managed, and that due process protections are still lacking.

Over the past 25 years, converging trends have escalated the need for public guardianship: the “graying” of the population (with a sudden upward spike anticipated around 2010 when the Boomers begin to hit age 65), the aging of individuals with disabilities, the aging of caregivers, advancements in medical technologies affording new choices for chronic conditions and end of life care, rising reports of elder abuse, and growing mobility that has increased distances between and among family members (Teaster, 2003). In response to these trends, most states have reformed their adult guardianship laws, and nearly all have enacted public guardianship programs. A new profession of private non-profit and for-profit guardianship service providers has emerged alongside that of public guardianship providers.

These developments are positioned against a backdrop of societal changes including the development of managed health care and other new forms of health care delivery; changes in long-term care, including the rise of assisted living; recent and massive state budgetary constraints forcing cutbacks in social programs; escalating litigation in the health and long-term care arenas; and moves to deinstitutionalize people with disabilities and identify community-based care (mandated by the 1999 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the *Olmstead v. L.C. ex rel. Zimring*, 527 U.S. 581).

In response to a documented need for guardians of last resort (Hightower, Heckert & Schmidt, 1990; Schmidt & Peters, 1987; Teaster & Roberto, 1997), the Florida Statewide Public Guardianship Office was established in 1999 by Sections 744.701-744.715 of the Florida Statutes. Public guardianship in the state of Florida was examined over 25 years ago (Bell, Schmidt, & Miller, 1981; Schmidt, 1981; Schmidt, Miller, Bell, & New, 1981), and later by Schmidt (1984); Peters, Schmidt, and Miller (1985); Schmidt (1987); Schmidt and Peters (1987); Schmidt, Miller, Peters, and Lowenstein (1988); and more recently by Teaster, Wood, Karp, Lawrence, Schmidt, and Mendiondo (2005). Although many important changes have occurred, the state, home to a burgeoning aging population, still does not have statewide coverage for public guardianship. From the 1981 Schmidt study, it took 18 years to establish a potential statewide system of public guardianship. That span of time is surprising, given that a clear foundation was established through published assessment of unmet need (Schmidt & Peters, 1987) and scholarly and legislative activity at the time.

The Florida public guardian programs are now administratively housed in the Department of Elder Affairs and cover approximately 30% of the counties in the state. The model established is the social services agency model and is identified as the “conflict of interest model” (Schmidt, Miller, Bell, & New, 1981; Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, & Schmidt, 2007). The local public guardian programs, typically non-profit entities, have contracts with the Statewide Public Guardianship Office and utilize a variety of methods of operation. At the time of this study, 15 programs are in existence (Department of Elder Affairs, 2008). The Statewide Office also has oversight of Florida’s private professional guardians.

An in-depth study of the public programs in Florida, building upon work conducted on a national level by Teaster, Wood, Schmidt, and Lawrence (2007), was commissioned by the Florida Department of Elder Affairs due to the rising older adult population, as well as the influx into the state of younger adults and their families. Florida is also home to a substantial number of racial and ethnic groups. The purpose of this study is to conduct a thorough analysis of the public guardian programs in Florida. To accomplish this task, aspects of the public programs are examined, including program provider models; characteristics, needs, and outcomes of incapacitated persons (IPs) served; cost savings realized; and allocation of funds by the public guardian programs and the Department of Elder Affairs.

The evaluation was conducted by the Graduate Center for Gerontology, University of Kentucky (UK). Florida's Department of Elder Affairs provided funding for the evaluation. The UK Graduate Center for Gerontology provided in-kind support of two doctoral level students for data entry and analysis, hired a research assistant specifically to assist with data preparation and report writing, utilized the skills of a biostatistician, and included a nationally recognized legal scholar.

## METHODOLOGY

Evaluation of the Florida public guardian programs is modeled on the research design originally used by Professor Winsor Schmidt and colleagues at Florida State University for the first two of Florida's pilot programs (Schmidt, Miller, Peters, & Lowenstein, 1988), the evaluation of the first two of Virginia's pilot programs (Teaster, Schmidt, Abramson, & Almeida, 1999), and another evaluation of the public guardianship programs in Virginia (Teaster & Roberto, 2003). Individual public guardian programs and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs provided important information and feedback during the evaluation period.

The study built upon earlier strategies used for data collection for a national study of public guardianship (Teaster, Wood, Karp, Lawrence, Schmidt, & Mendiondo, 2005; Teaster, Wood, Schmidt, & Lawrence, 2008) and the Virginia public guardianship evaluation (Teaster & Roberto, 2003). In addition to public guardians' surveys, investigators used applicable state programmatic data.

### *Data Collection Measures*

1. **Analysis of the program models.** Program models are analyzed by gathering information on IPs served and service outcomes, administrative procedures, activities of the program, and associated programmatic costs.
2. **Characteristics of the IPs.** Demographic and health characteristics of the IPs served, including their past, present, and future needs, and outcomes of service provision are determined from self-reported data provided by the programs and from the database of the Department of Elder Affairs.
3. **Cost savings.** Costs to the state, cost savings for the state, and quality of life improvements for the IPs served by the programs are calculated from information collected through an email survey. The survey was completed such that information on up to six specific actions resulting in program savings and up to nine specific actions improving quality of life were appropriately recorded for each active, individual IP as of September 1, 2008.
4. **Allocation of programmatic and state funds.** Recommendations for the most efficient and effective allocation of state funds for public guardianship are made based on information from individual public guardian programs as well as from the Executive Director of the Statewide Public Guardianship Office.

### *Data Collection Procedures*

The evaluation of the Florida public guardian programs took place in 2008 – 2009. Data were collected on-line during the fall of 2008 and the winter and spring of 2009. All Florida programs participated in the data collection. A survey was developed to analyze the models of service provision; to investigate characteristics, needs, and outcomes of service provision; and to gather information and calculate cost savings.

### *Data Analysis*

All data manipulation and data analyses were performed with SAS<sup>®</sup> statistical software. The first step in the analysis process was to review the data for accuracy. The entire data set was examined to identify inappropriate values and outliers. Preliminary data analyses examined distributions, means, and standard deviations among variables for data cleaning purposes only. Descriptive statistics were used to create a profile of the programs and the IPs and to assess program implementation. Differences in the characteristics between the IP population and general population of Florida were assessed using Chi-Square analysis. Analyses were performed on the population of active IPs as of September 1,

2008. IPs were considered active if documented by both the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and by the individual public guardian programs in Florida.

## FINDINGS

Findings are organized into two broad sections: program administration and characteristics of the IPs. The first section includes a description of the programs, data on program staffing and administrative duties, an accounting of program administrative time, and programmatic cost savings. The second section provides an in-depth examination of the IPs enrolled in the programs and their associated costs.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

#### *Description of the Programs*

Fifteen public guardian programs serve IPs needing guardians. Eighteen primarily urban counties and two primarily rural counties are served by the 15 public guardian programs (Figure 1). Three programs serve more than one county. Brief program descriptions follow (i.e., program organization, client census on September 1, 2008, and types of documentation utilized).

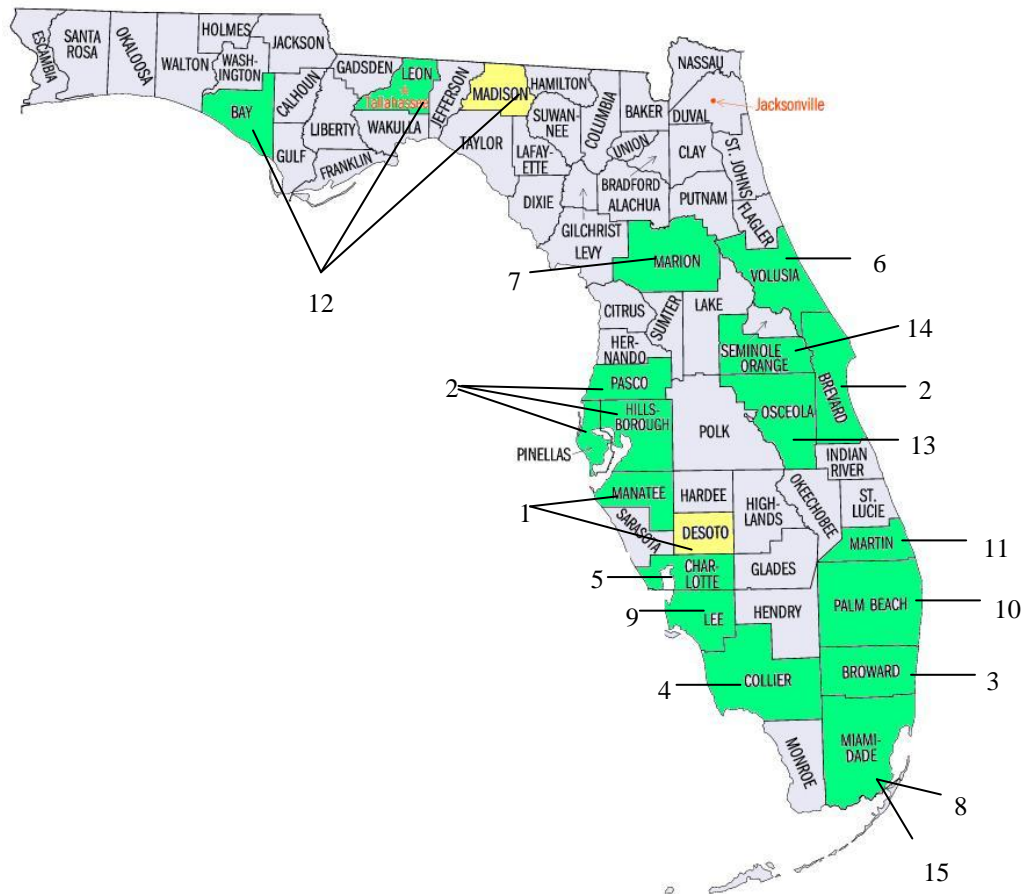


Figure 1: Public Guardianship Programs in Florida<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Green color denotes urban counties and yellow denotes rural counties served by the Florida public guardianship programs.

1. **Aging Safely** serves Manatee and De Soto Counties. The program has two full-time (FT) staff members and one part-time (PT) staff member. At the time of the evaluation, the program was serving as guardian for 26 IPs and serving as Health Care Proxy for 10 people.
2. **Aging Solutions, Inc.** is staffed with 8 FT employees and 7 PT employees. As of September 1, 2008, they were serving 246 IPs. The program uses an internal form that assists in documenting IP weight status, medications and treatments, mileage, and time spent per IP. It enters data into the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System.
3. **The Barry University School of Social Work, Office of the Public Guardian** is staffed by a *pro-bono* attorney who provides counsel and addresses all legal matters for the 151 IPs whom the program serves. The program keeps a log of IP visits, as well as an itinerary log, an IP list, an on-call list, an intake and referral/waiting list, and an auto-pay and IP balance list.
4. & 5. **The Collier County and Charlotte County Public Guardian** consists of one program covering *two* counties. A private attorney, along with 2 FT case managers, 1 FT office manager, 1 FT attorney, and 1 FT office staff, staffs this program. On September 1, 2008, the program in Charlotte County served 72 IPs, and 68 IPs were served in Collier County. Documentation includes interview sheets and log books.
6. **Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.** is a lead agency (i.e., provides and coordinates services for elders in designated Community Service System areas for the Department of Elder Affairs) and includes one FT professional guardian, one FT support staff member for bookkeeping, and a registered nurse who is also registered with SPGO. The FT support member for bookkeeping is a professional guardian and has Registered Guardian status with the Center for Guardianship Certification. On September 1, 2008, the program was serving 39 IPs. Documentation and other activities used to account for IP work include a referral form, attending care plan meetings, visiting the IP every two weeks or more if needed, and attending physician appointments. Documentation is kept using a computer system.
7. **Fifth Circuit Public Guardian Corporation.** Formed in January 2001, this organization has a staff of 4 FT employees: an unfunded executive director, an RN who is also becoming a nationally certified and registered professional guardian, a part-time paralegal, and a bookkeeper/administrative support staff member. The case manager and the paralegal both have Registered Guardian status by the Center for Guardianship Certification. On September 1, 2008, Fifth Circuit served 42 IPs with a waiting list of approximately 49 IPs. The program's contract with the State is for 40 IPs, but due to deaths or transfers to successor guardians, the program took care of more during the last funding cycle and plans to take care of even more IPs this year. Fifth Circuit notes that the State has not increased funding in three years even though the number of IPs and their costs have gone up significantly.

The program also provided some figures specific to the area served by them from the United Way: an estimated 75,000 residents of Marion County are aged 65 or older with 85,000 predicted in 2010 and 101,000 in 2013; the population of seniors over 80 is the fastest growing population in Marion County; more than 9,000 seniors in Marion County over 65 have Alzheimer's; and approximately 17,000 people in Marion County 65+ live alone. Systems used for documentation are the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System, QuickBooks, Excel, Outlook, and Access.

8. **Guardianship Program of Dade County** uses 40 FT staff dedicated to program efforts. On September 1, 2008, the program served 994 IPs. Time logs on a Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System document guardianship work completed.
9. **Lee County Public Guardianship Program** staff members include a private attorney, 1 FT office assistant, 1 PT office assistant, 1 PT Registered Nurse, and 1 PT employee with a Master's in Social Work. On September 1, 2008, the program was serving 121 IPs and using a database program and physical files for documentation.
10. **Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.,** provides services through the work of 1 FT staff member for fiscal matters; 2 FT staff members, both with Master's of Social Work degrees; 1 FT paralegal/administrator; 1 (0.6) FT

Registered Nurse; and 1 (0.6) FT attorney. The program was serving 79 IPs on September 1, 2008, and documented its work through the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System and Quattro Pro.

11. **Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.,** has a 9 person Board of Directors and is administered by an attorney for Martin Memorial Health Systems, the only hospital in the county. Martin County Public Guardian, Inc., contracts with the Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, an adjacent county and another public guardian program (#10 above), to perform services for the Martin County program. The following positions staff the program: 0.25 FT attorney, 0.50 FT social worker, and 0.50 bookkeeper/paralegal. The Martin County Public Guardian pays for associated overhead. They were serving 10 IPs as of September 1, 2008, and use the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System and Quattro Pro to document their work.
12. **Office of the Public Guardian, Inc.,** is staffed with 5 FT and 3 (0.5) FT employees: 1 executive director, 3.5 case managers/guardian representatives, 1 program specialist, 0.5 accounts manager, and 0.5 administrative file clerk. They were serving 163 IPs as of September 1, 2008. They document their work in the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System. At weekly staff meetings, case managers discuss significant issues that arise. At these staff meetings, plans of action are determined and followed. Case managers are responsible for initiating and approving expenditures on behalf of IPs using check request forms and authorizing automatic expenditures for regular expenditures. Staff members use a variety of reporting techniques and checklists to track new cases, annual reports, and other requirements.
13. **Osceola Council on Aging** includes 2 FT staff (i.e., professional guardian and guardian assistant) and one (.05) FT registered nurse. It was serving 35 IPs on September 1, 2008, and uses client care plans, time logs, and assessment forms to document work. The program also uses the Statewide Public Guardianship Office Management System.
14. **Seniors First, Inc.,** uses an assigned attorney from Legal Aid as needed, a department attorney, 3 FT case managers, 1 FT executive director, and 1 (0.5) FT assistant. Serving 93 IPs on September 1, 2008, the program documents its work by using assessments, care plans (meeting held on a quarterly basis), time logs, and monthly case notes.
15. **The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.,** uses private attorneys and limits their hourly rate. Staff members include 1 executive director (uncompensated), 1 FT licensed social worker, 1 FT guardianship caseworker, 1 0.5 FT guardianship caseworker, and 1 0.5 FT clerical staff member. Serving 69 IPs on September 1, 2008, the program uses Time Slips software for case notes and tracking time, daily time and activity logs, a biopsychosocial assessment and the Mini-Mental Status Examination, and Statewide Public Guardianship Office software.

### ***Classification of Program Models***

The administrative structure of the 15 individual Florida programs described in detail above is embedded within a larger, national classification of public guardianship. The state of Florida, as well as the 15 programs with which it contracts, is classified as a ***Division of a Social Service Agency*** (Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, & Schmidt, 2007). The four models of public guardianship originally proposed by Regan and Springer (1977) are described below (Schmidt, Miller, Bell & New, 1981, pp. 59-60).

*The Division of a Social Service Agency establishes the public guardian office within a pre-existing social service agency. The public guardian is appointed by the governor. This model may be considered a conflict of interest model. In this situation, an agency is providing services to the same clients for whom they are guardian, thus encouraging use of services that may not be in the best interests of the IP.*

*The Court Model establishes the public guardian as an official of the court that has jurisdiction over guardianship and conservatorship. The chief judge of this court appoints the public guardian. The chief administrative judge of the state has rulemaking power for the purpose of statewide uniformity.*

*The Independent State Office is established in the executive branch of government with the public guardian appointed by the governor.*

*The County Model establishes a public guardian within each county. The local official may be more sensitive to the needs of the elderly [or incompetent] in a particular county. The public guardian is appointed by the county government. The state attorney general would regulate these county offices.*

### ***Commentary on the Individual Florida Public Guardianship Programs***

The research team was asked to provide commentary on the 15 public guardian program models. That the programs are all housed within a division of a social services agency, the Statewide Public Guardianship Office within the Department of Elder Affairs, is already noted above, as is the conflict of interest inherent in the model, which the individual programs inherit. Among other things, this model of providing public guardian services puts social services providers in the position of consenting to or refusing their own services (Schmidt, Miller, Bell, & New, 1981; Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, & Schmidt, 2007).

Although it is unlikely that the overall state administrative structure might change (Florida public guardianship programs were originally housed in the Office of the State Courts Administrator in 1982), it is possible to highlight favorable individual program characteristics.

1. *Staff to client ratio.* It is commendable that the state of Florida mandates a 1:40 staff to IP ratio. Florida is one of only seven states to mandate a ratio. However, previous research in Florida 28 years ago established a ratio of 1:30 (Schmidt, Miller, Bell, & New, 1981). Subsequent research in Virginia, the only other state in which a cost analysis was conducted and a state with an administrative structure similar to Florida, established an updated ratio of 1:20 (Schmidt, Teaster, Abramson, & Almeida, 1997). The most recent national study of public guardianship confirms the 1:20 ratio (Teaster, Wood, Lawrence & Schmidt, 2007). The programs should comply with this evidence-based standard, and dollars should be allocated for its immediate implementation.
2. *Staff with higher education.* The 2007 national study published by Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, and Schmidt (2007) recommended that staff members have no less than college degrees. Programs with staff members with these qualifications tend to provide better service to IPs than those that do not. A recent study investigating the relationship between state guardian certification requirements for education and guardian sanctioning in the state of Washington found that 83.3% of high school diploma or equivalency (GED) graduates are likely to have more severe sanctions compared with 76.4% with undergraduate or higher education (Schmidt, Akinci, & Wagner, 2007). The Certified Professional Guardian Board in Washington state subsequently recommended increasing education requirements for guardian certification so that high school graduates or equivalents are no longer certified, and the Washington Supreme Court approved the recommendation.
3. *Professional staff including a compensated attorney.* Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, and Schmidt (2007) also found that programs with attorneys, especially programs with attorneys as the chief administrator (e.g., Tucson, AZ, Office of the Public Guardian; Phoenix, AZ, Office of the Public Guardian; Cook County, Chicago, IL, Office of the Public Guardian), were more successful and provided better service to IPs than those that did not. Programs with staff with these qualifications tend to have better administration, and thus, service to IPs, than those that do not. Findings from the national study revealed that having this level of professionalism results in better performing programs, consequently reducing risk and increasing chances of success over time. Public guardians are public agents of the court with legal fiduciary duties and responsibilities that are best understood and implemented by attorneys.
4. *Full-time staff members as opposed to part-time staff members.* Programs with full-time staff members are better able to provide continuity of IP service than those with a majority of part-time staff members who are stretched thin with other responsibilities and percentages of time dedicated to other tasks. We recommend the appropriate funding of programs so that they are staffed by as many college-educated, full-time employees as possible.

5. *Appropriate and accurate assessment documents.* Since the 1980s, researchers (Schmidt, Miller, Peters, & Lowenstein, 1988; Teaster, Wood, Lawrence, & Schmidt, 2008) have continuously stressed the importance of using regularly updated client assessment forms, care plans, and time logs for each IP. Having uniformity of these documents is critical for the 15 public guardian programs. The computerization of all information and the accuracy of data entry are crucial (Schmidt, 1982; 1984). Programs using these documents and entering this information into a computerized database have better service to IPs than those programs that do not.

The Statewide Public Guardianship Office (SPGO) awards contracts for local offices in accordance with 744.703 Florida Statutes and through a Request for Proposals process as prescribed by Florida Statutes. Parties must meet the following qualifications for SPGO appointment as a public guardian:

1. A Florida resident and at least 18 years of age
2. Completed the SPGO approved forty-hour professional guardianship-training course as well as any applicable SPGO approved continuing education credits
3. Passed the Florida Professional Guardianship Competency Examination or have been granted a waiver
4. Completed SPGO registration
5. Knowledge of the legal process and knowledge of the social services available to meet the needs of incapacitated persons
6. Staff levels to meet Florida Statutes governing public guardianship, including an attorney who has experience in probate and another person who has a master’s degree in social work, or a gerontologist, psychologist, registered nurse, or nurse practitioner
7. If a non-profit corporate guardian, a tax exempt status from the United States Internal Revenue Service is required
8. Verification that the interested party does not hold a position that would create a conflict of interest.

Serving as a public guardian requires an appointment by the SPGO, a contract with the SPGO and, a contract with a funding source. Appointment by the SPGO may be for up to four years. However, the contract with the funding source may be subject to annual appropriation. If the state is not the funding source, parties qualified by the SPGO are placed on a list of candidates and submitted to the funding source for consideration.

### **Programs and Program Administration**

As of September 1, 2008, the 15 public guardianship programs were asked to provide the numbers of IPs they were serving (Table 1). On that day, the programs were serving 2,208 IPs, with the number of IPs per program ranging from 10 IPs (Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.) to a high of 994 IPs (Guardianship Program of Dade County). The total number of 418 IPs on waiting lists ranged from a low of 0 (Collier County, Guardianship Program of Dade County, Martin County Public Guardian, Inc., The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.) to a high of 150 (Aging Solutions, Inc.). It is important to note that some programs have no persons on their waiting list because there has been no movement in IP census numbers (i.e., programs are at their service capacity) for so long that possible IPs are no longer put on the list by referral sources.

Table 1: Program Catchment Areas and Number of IPs Contracted to Serve as of September 1, 2008

<b>Program</b>	<b>Catchment Area</b>	<b>IPs Served</b>
Aging Safely	Manatee and DeSoto Counties	26
Aging Solutions, Inc.	Hillsborough, Pinellas, Brevard, and Pasco Counties	246
Barry University, Office of the Public Guardian	Broward County	151
Collier County Public Guardian	Collier County	68
Charlotte County Public Guardian	Charlotte County	72

<b>Program</b>	<b>Catchment Area</b>	<b>IPs Served</b>
Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.	Volusia County	39
Fifth Circuit Public Guardian Corporation	Marion County	42
Guardianship Program of Dade County	Miami-Dade County	994
Lee County Public Guardianship Program	Lee County	121
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.	Palm Beach County	79
Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.	Martin County	10
Office of the Public Guardian, Inc.	Leon, Madison, and Bay Counties	163
Osceola Council on Aging	Osceola County	35
Seniors First, Inc.	Orange County	93
The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.	Miami-Dade County	69
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>2,208</b>

Although most programs are not-for-profit, Barry University Office of the Public Guardian is housed within a School of Social Work, one program is housed within a hospital, and one program is housed within a legal aid society.

#### *Program Staffing*

*Paid Staff.* The programs use a mix of full-time and part-time staff (Table 2). Programs report a total of 93 full-time staff and 19 part-time staff. Case managers are the most frequently reported staff members.

Over the course of the evaluation period, 8 individuals served as full-time equivalent (FTE) professional paid staff members who make binding decisions for IPs (e.g., public guardian, case worker, social worker). Three executive directors are reported as uncompensated. Program descriptions indicate that eight programs have attorneys either as the program supervisor or as part of the staff.

Table 2: Paid Staff

<b>Staff Position</b>	<b>Full-Time</b>	<b>Part-Time</b>
Full-time equivalent professional paid staff members who make binding decisions for IPs	8	0
Administrative (Secretary/Office Manager)	12	6
Fiscal Manager	4	0
Legal Consultant	4	2
Case Manager	37	5
Social Worker/ RN	9	1
Other (e.g., IP advocate, program aide, program director, executive director, student intern)	19	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>19</b>

*Staff to IP Ratio*

Table 3 indicates the ratio of staff to IP. When including all FTE staff members in the ratio, no program exceeds the 1:40 ratio of IP to public guardian staff. However, when considering IPs to FTE “binding decision makers” (e.g., public guardian, case worker, social worker, or attorney), 5 programs exceed the ratio.

Table 3: Staff to IP Ratio

<b>Programs</b>	<b>IPs</b>	<b># FTE (Any)</b>	<b># Staff (Any): IP</b>	<b># FTE (Binding Decision Makers)</b>	<b># Staff (Binding Decision Makers): IP</b>
Ageing Safely	26	1	1:26	0.5	1:52
Ageing Solutions, Inc.	246	11.5	1:21	9	1:27
Barry University, Office of the Public Guardian	151	9	1:17	4	1:38
Collier and Charlotte County Public Guardian	140	5	1:28	3	1:47
Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.	39	3	1:13	3	1:13
Fifth Circuit Public Guardian Corporation	42	5	1:8	2	1:21
Guardianship Program of Dade County	994	40	1:25	24	1:41
Lee County Public Guardianship Program	121	3.5	1:35	2	1:61
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.	79	6.2	1:13	3.2	1:24
Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.	10	1.2	1:8	0.75	1:13
Office of the Public Guardian, Inc.	163	7.5	1:22	3.5	1:47
Osceola Council on Aging	35	2.5	1:14	2.5	1:14
Seniors First, Inc.	93	4.5	1:21	3	1:31
The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.	69	4	1:17	2.5	1:28
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,208</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>1:21</b>	<b>61.35</b>	<b>1:35</b>

*Program Administration Time*

Across activities, the 15 programs recorded an average of 633 administrative hours per month (Table 4). The greatest amount of time was spent on “other” common everyday necessities of program administration (e.g., telephone calls, mail, maintaining files, straightening office) (mean = 246 hours). Agency-related travel ranked second (mean = 187 hours), followed by time responding to pager (mean= 86 hours) and meetings (mean = 45 hours).

Table 4: Program Administration Time

<b>Task</b>	<b>Mean ± SD (Hours)</b>
Travel	187 ± 497
Meetings	45 ± 99
In-service/other training	6 ± 12
Program evaluation	7 ± 8
Time responding to pager	86 ± 233
Human resources	8 ± 20

<b>Task</b>	<b>Mean ± SD (Hours)</b>
Multidisciplinary board activities	6 ± 14
Screening new clients	7 ± 6
Time working on weekend	20 ± 39
Grant work	6 ± 11
Promotion & development tasks	9 ± 25
Other program administration tasks	246 ± 611
<b>OVERALL AVERAGE</b>	<b>633 ± 1,536</b>

### *Costs of Operating Programs*

From July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, the public guardian programs report an SPGO state allotment of \$2,057,413 to operate the 15 programs (Table 5a). The average yearly state contribution per program was \$137,161. The average monthly cost per program was **\$487,283** (Table 5b). The average yearly cost of serving an IP in Florida was \$2,648 in 2008 and \$2,857 in 1983 (Schmidt, Miller, Peters, & Lowenstein, 1988). For the state of Virginia, the average yearly cost per IP of was \$2,662 in 1997 (Teaster, Schmidt, Abramson, & Almeida, 1999) and \$2,955 in 2002 (Teaster & Roberto, 2003). The low costs per IP are likely the result of the too-high, 1:40 IP to staff ratio in Florida.

Table 5a: Costs of Program Operations-Funding Sources

<b>Program</b>	<b>SPGO State Funding</b>	<b>County Funding</b>	<b>United Way Funding</b>	<b>IOTA Funding</b>	<b>Private Funding</b>	<b>Other Funding Sources</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Aging Safely	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
Aging Solutions, Inc.	\$601,000	\$52,550	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,500	\$661,050
Barry University	\$338,370	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,200	\$0	\$339,570
Collier County	\$104,700	\$192,113	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$296,813
Charlotte County	\$0	\$186,950	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$186,950
Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.	\$0	\$102,700	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$102,700
Fifth Circuit Public Guardian	\$106,100	\$0	\$37,500	\$0	\$6,200	\$0	\$149,800
Guardianship Program of Dade County	\$129,446	\$2,067,938	\$0	\$101,773	\$138,799	\$114,636	\$2,552,592
Lee County Public Guardianship Program	\$0	\$272,600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$272,600
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.	\$130,250	\$202,808	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$333,058
Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$35,000	\$10,048	\$45,048
Office of the Public Guardian, Inc.	\$337,500	\$0	\$19,290	\$0	\$10,000	\$22,735	\$389,525

<b>Program</b>	<b>SPGO State Funding</b>	<b>County Funding</b>	<b>United Way Funding</b>	<b>IOTA Funding</b>	<b>Private Funding</b>	<b>Other Funding Sources</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Osceola Council on Aging	\$76,200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$76,200
Seniors First, Inc.	\$75,580	\$108,000	\$0	\$0	\$32,676	\$54,971	\$271,227
The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.	\$146,637	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$146,637
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,057,413</b>	<b>\$3,185,659</b>	<b>\$56,790</b>	<b>\$101,773</b>	<b>\$235,875</b>	<b>\$209,890</b>	<b>\$5,847,400</b>

\*One-time FIG funding was received by three programs, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach (\$64,782), Aging Safely (\$50,000), and Office of Public Guardian (\$3000) representing 19%, 417%, and 0.8% of the total funding for this time period, respectively. FIG funding was not included in the total amount because it is not an on-going source of income and does not represent program's typical operating budget.

Table 5b: Costs of Program Operations- Estimated Cost of Program by Month and Client

<b>Program</b>	<b># IPs</b>	<b>All Funding Sources</b>	<b>Estimated Monthly Cost per Program</b>	<b>Estimated Monthly Cost per Client</b>	<b>Estimated Yearly Cost per Client</b>
Aging Safely	26	\$12,000	\$1,000	\$39	\$468
Aging Solutions, Inc.	246	\$661,050	\$55,088	\$224	\$2,687
Barry University, Office of the Public Guardian	151	\$339,570	\$28,298	\$187	\$2,249
Collier County Public Guardian	68	\$296,813	\$24,734	\$363	\$4,365
Charlotte County Public Guardian	72	\$186,950	\$15,579	\$216	\$2,597
Council on Aging of Volusia County, Inc.	39	\$102,700	\$8,558	\$219	\$2,633
Fifth Circuit Public Guardian Corporation	42	\$149,800	\$12,483	\$297	\$3,567
Guardianship Program of Dade County	994	\$2,552,592	\$212,716	\$214	\$2,568
Lee County Public Guardianship Program	121	\$272,600	\$22,717	\$188	\$2,253
Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc.	78	\$333,058	\$28,172	\$361	\$4,334
Martin County Public Guardian, Inc.	10	\$45,048	\$3,754	\$375	\$4,505
Office of the Public Guardian, Inc.	164	\$389,525	\$32,460	\$197	\$2,375
Osceola Council on Aging	35	\$76,200	\$6,350	\$181	\$2,177
Seniors First, Inc.	93	\$271,227	\$22,602	\$243	\$2,916
The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.	69	\$146,637	\$12,220	\$177	\$2,125
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>2,208</b>	<b>\$5,847,400</b>	<b>\$487,283</b>	<b>\$221</b>	<b>\$2,648</b>

### ***Tangible Cost Savings***

Programs report conducting numerous actions and activities for IPs that result in substantial cost savings for the state of Florida (Table 6). Facilitating the discharge of IPs from medical hospitals to assisted living facility resulted in the largest cost savings. Other cost saving measures include discharge from a state hospital to an assisted living facility or a nursing home, discharge from a medical hospital to a nursing home, and securing community-based services for IPs. In addition to these cost saving activities, the state makes arrangements for pre-paid funerals. Cost savings for pre-paid funerals was not included in the report. However, for each 100 pre-paid funeral arranged in a year's time, the state could realize \$600,000 in savings.

Table 6: Cost Savings Activities Conducted by the Guardianship Programs<sup>a</sup>

<b>Results from Re-analysis</b>	<b>June – December 2008</b>		<b>Projected Actions for 1 Year<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Estimated Cost Savings for 1 Year</b>
	<b>Programs</b>	<b>IPs</b>	<b>IPs</b>	<b>Cost Savings</b>
Discharge from state hospital to assisted living facility	1	32	64	138,240
Discharge from state hospital to nursing home	6	261	522	328,860
Discharge from medical hospital to nursing home	1	17	34	165,852
Discharge from medical hospital to assisted living facility	8	241	481	2,493,504
Secure comm.-based service (to prevent moving to more restrictive environ)	10	407	814	814,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>\$3,940,456</b>

<sup>a</sup> Information on the calculation of cost-savings is found in Appendix A.

<sup>b</sup> Number of IPs for the six-month period was doubled to project figures for an entire year.

Overall, during the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, the programs' estimated total cost savings to the state of Florida was **\$1,883,043** (Table 7).

Table 7: Overall Cost Savings

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total State Funding</b>	<b>Program Cost Savings</b>	<b>Cost Savings to the State<sup>a</sup></b>
<b>2008</b>	<b>\$2,057,413</b>	<b>\$3,940,456</b>	<b>\$1,883,043</b>

<sup>a</sup> Represents reported cost savings minus total state funding.

### ***Intangible Cost Savings - Quality of Life Actions***

Important, intangible cost savings were realized in improving the quality of life of IPs by the programs that serve them. For the period of January 1, 2008 through July 1, 2008, programs most often report providing emotional support to the client, enhancing client socialization, securing needed medical care and/or equipment and re-establishing relationships with family and friends (Table 8). Other common activities include arranging an IP's funeral, placing an IP in an appropriate facility, establishing a residence for a homeless person, and re-establishing religious affiliations.

Table 8: Programs Implementing Quality of Life Actions

Quality of Life Action/Activity	Number of Programs
Provided client emotional support	15
Secured needed medical care and/or equipment	13
Enhanced client socialization (e.g., visits, shopping)	15
Re-established relationships with family and friends	13
Arranged client’s funeral	12
Made appropriate placement from home to facility	12
Re-established religious affiliations	7
Established residence for homeless person	11

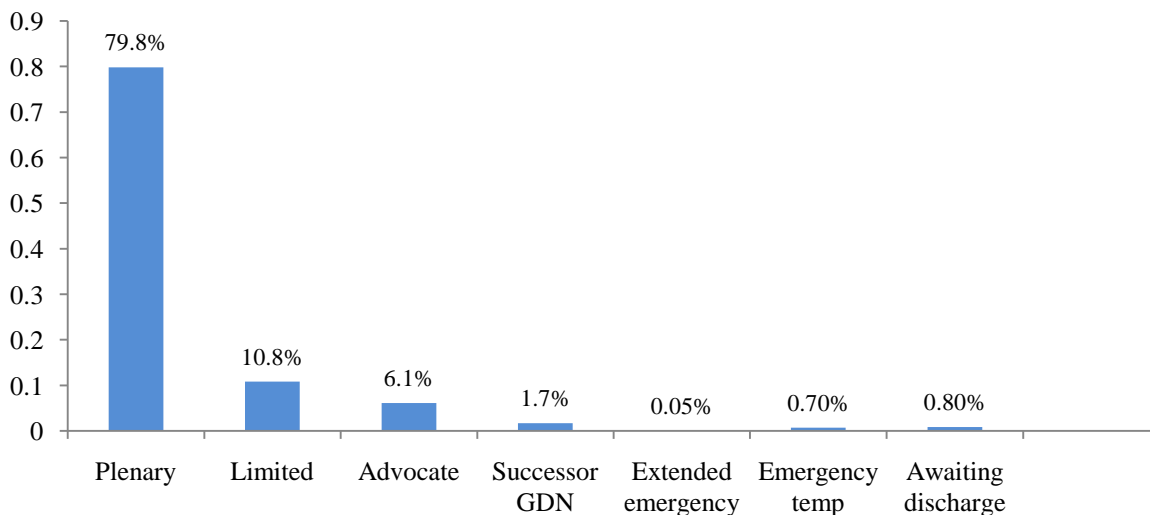
### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INCAPACITATED PEOPLE

This portion of the report provides information about the incapacitated persons (IPs) served by the SPGO programs as of September 1, 2008. Information is provided about the demographic characteristics of the IPs and their health and functional abilities.

#### Demographic Characteristics

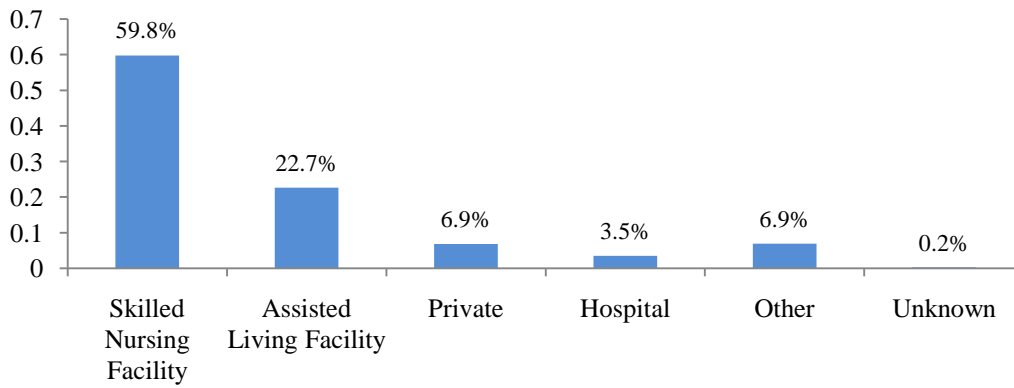
Figures 2 through 9 provide specific details about demographic characteristics of the IPs. In all figures below, left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the guardianship programs of Florida, and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data. The distribution of the types of guardianship provided for the IPs is shown in Figure 2. The majority of guardianships constitutes plenary guardianships (79.8%), followed by limited guardianships (10.8%), and guardian advocates (6.1%).

Figure 2: Type of Guardianship Provided for IPs (n=1,713)



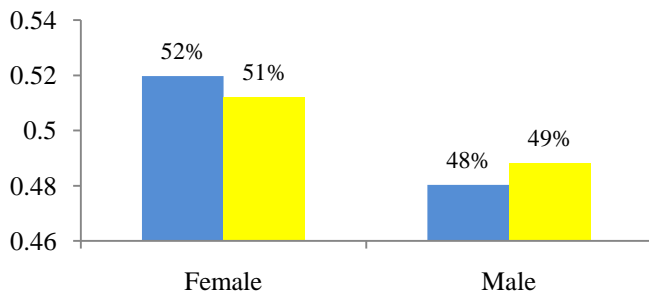
IPs most commonly reside in facilities providing an increased level of supervision and assistance with activities of daily living, such as skilled nursing facilities (59.8%) or assisted living facilities (22.7%), with a very small percentage (6.9%) of the population living in private residence (Figure 3). Only 3.5% of the IPs live in hospitals, and 6.9% of the IP population lives in other types of residences such as adult home, group home, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, home care, and hospice.

Figure 3: Type of Residence of IPs (n=2,114)



The distribution of sex of IPs is similar to that seen in the 2000 Florida census data, consisting of approximately half females (52%) and half males (48%) (Figure 4).

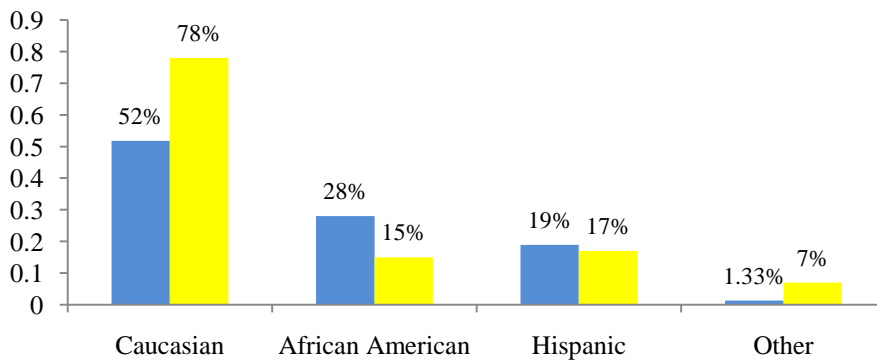
Figure 4: Sex (n=2,180)



\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

Approximately half of the IPs are Caucasian (52%), and 19% are Hispanic. A similar percentage of general population in Florida is Hispanic. A larger percentage of African-Americans are seen in the IP population as compared to the general population of Florida (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Race (n=2,180)

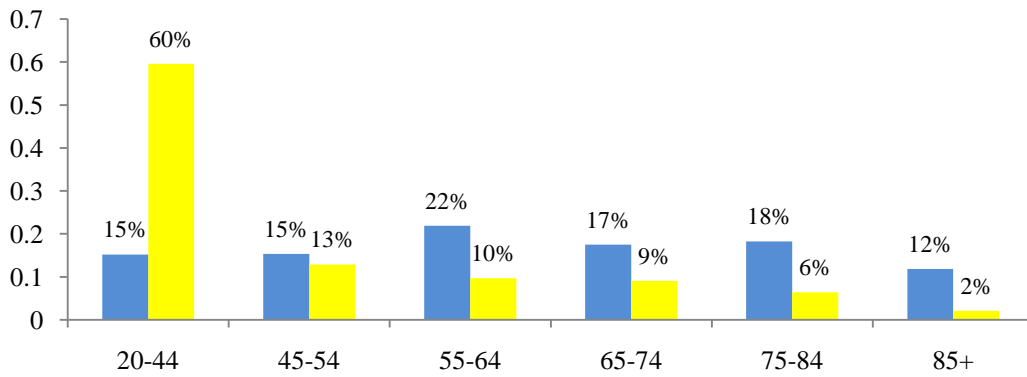


\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

\*\*Hispanic ethnicity was recorded separately from race in the 2000 Florida Census.

The IPs have an average age of 66 years. The IPs are significantly older ( $p < .00001$ ), with 70% of the IPs being 55 years of age and older compared to 27% who are 55 years of age and older in the general population of Florida (Figure 6).

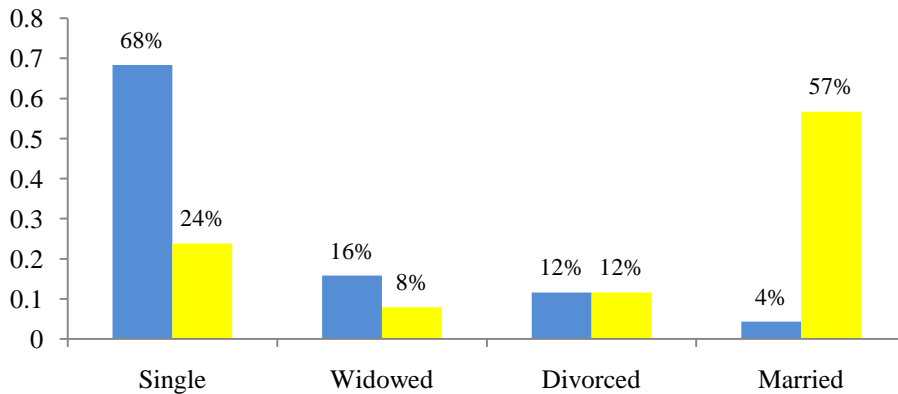
Figure 6: Age (n=2,156)



\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

Most IPs are single (68%) versus (24%) in the general population of Floridians. The majority of the general population is married (57%) versus 4% married in the SPGO IP population (Figure 7). This difference is statistically significant ( $p < .00001$ ).

Figure 7: Marital Status (n=1,943)



\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

Forty-one percent (41%) of IPs have annual incomes below \$5,499; only 12% of the IPs have annual incomes of \$11,000 or more (Figure 8). In contrast with the general population of Florida, the annual income distribution of IPs differs significantly, with the majority (65%) of the general population earning between \$15,000 and \$75,000 annually (Table 9). The difference in income between the IP and general populations is further illustrated in Figure 9, with 95% of IPs reporting an annual income below \$15,000 and only 16% of the general population of Florida reporting an annual income below \$15,000 ( $p < .00001$ ).

Figure 8: IP's Annual Family Income before Taxes (n=1,924)

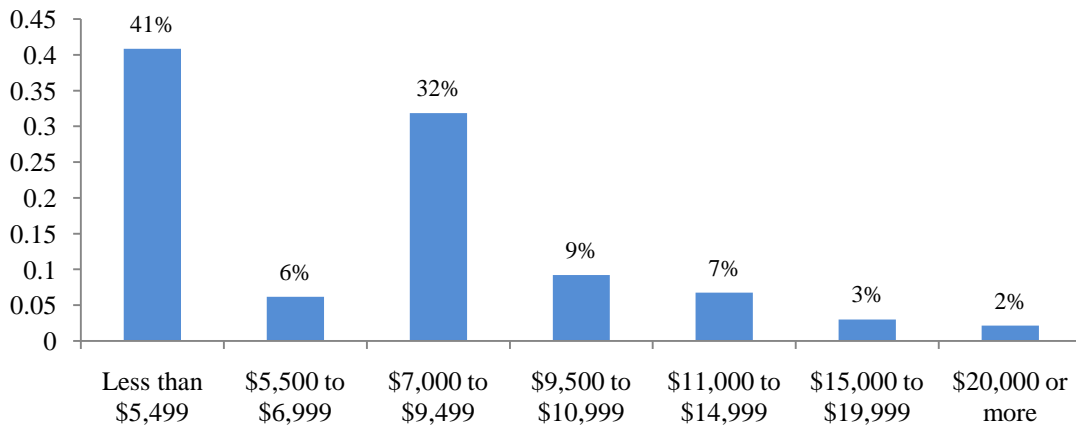
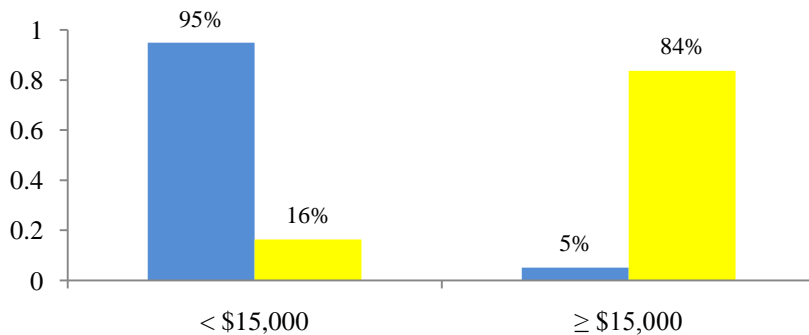


Table 9: 2000 Florida Census Data: Annual Family Income before Taxes

Income	Frequency	%
Less than \$10,000	606,995	10%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	427,050	7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	918,455	14%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	901,454	14%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	1,103,554	17%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	1,170,569	18%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	552,379	9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	398,860	6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	114,432	2%
\$200,000 or more	147,373	2%

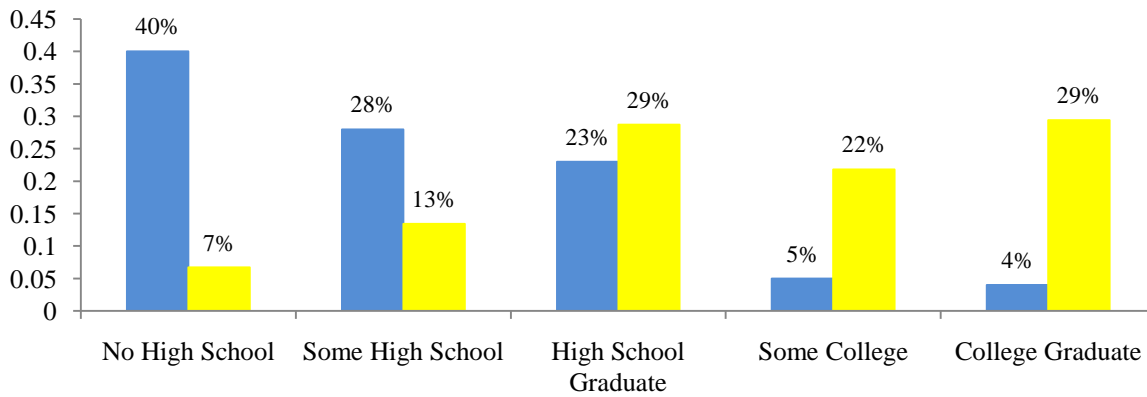
Figure 9: Comparison of the annual income of IPs and the 2000 Florida Census (n=1,924)



\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

Nearly two-thirds (68%) of IPs have less than a high school education (Figure 10). Only 23% of the IPs hold a high school diploma. Four percent of IPs have a college degree. Again, the distribution of education in the IP population is quite different than that found in the general population, in which approximately 80% earned a high school diploma, and 29% earned a college degree (Figure 10). The IPs are significantly less educated than is the general population of Florida ( $p < .00001$ ).

Figure 10: Education (n=1,225)



\*Left (blue) denotes the IP population served by the Guardianship programs of Florida and right (yellow) denotes the 2000 Florida census data.

*Health and Functional Abilities*

Diagnoses of health conditions of IPs were provided by 11 programs: Aging Solutions, Inc., Barry University, Collier County Public Guardian, Charlotte County Public Guardian, Fifth Circuit Public Guardian Corporation, Lee County Public Guardianship Program, Legal Aid Society of Palm Beach County, Inc., Martin County Public Guardian, Inc., Office of the Public Guardian, Inc., Osceola Council on Aging, and The Guardianship Care Group, Inc.

The proportion of IPs with diagnosed neurological, psychiatric, and developmental conditions is similar across programs. Forty-three percent (43%) of IPs are diagnosed with a neurological condition; 41% are diagnosed with a psychiatric condition; and 48% are diagnosed with a developmental health condition. Neurological conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, Alzheimer’s disease, other dementias, and epilepsy. Psychiatric conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, depression, and anxiety. Developmental conditions are defined as including, but not limited to, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and autism.

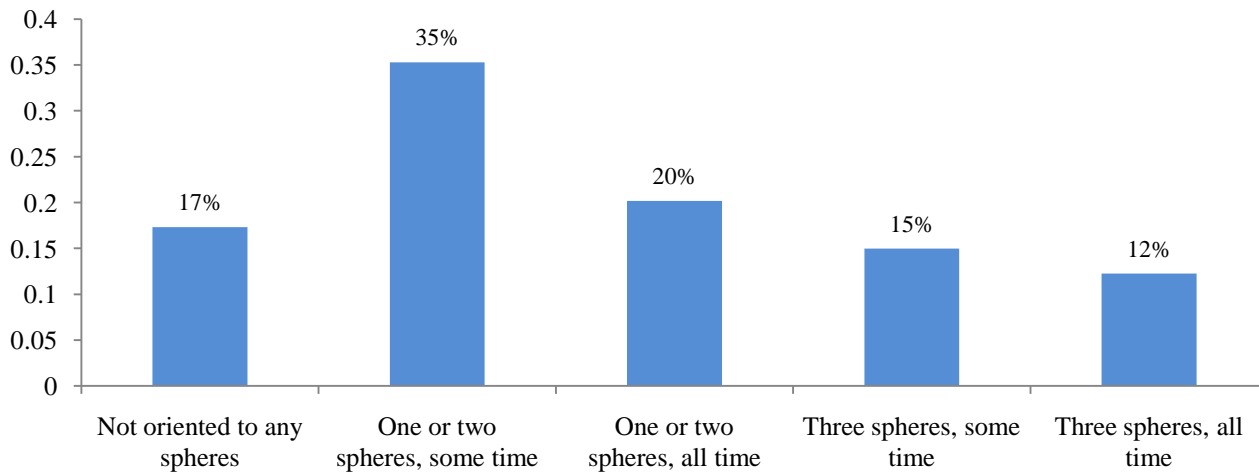
IPs’ Activities of Daily Living (ADL) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL) requirements are reported in Table 10. Most are able to perform ADLs with or without some assistance. The majority are not, however, able to perform IADLs.

Table 10: ADL and IADL Needs of the IPs (Data based on programs 2-5, 10, 12-13, 15)

<b>Basic ADLs</b>	<b>Requires no assistance (%)</b>	<b>Requires some assistance (%)</b>	<b>Unable to perform activity (%)</b>
Bathing	12.7	62.6	27.8
Dressing	21.6	55.1	23.6
Toileting	28.8	47.5	23.6
Transferring	53.1	27.2	19.0
Eating	51.1	37.7	11.1
Walking	50.8	25.9	23.3
Climbing	31.5	22.6	45.9
<b>Instrumental ADLs</b>			
Meal preparation	4.0	11.8	84.3
Housekeeping	7.8	33.4	58.7
Money management	0.3	10.8	88.8
Transportation	7.8	21.3	70.8
Laundry	3.6	18.4	78.0
Shopping	2.6	35.1	62.3
Taking medication	1.4	19.3	79.3

IPs' orientation to person, place, and time is illustrated in Figure 11. Seventeen percent (17%) of IPs are not oriented to any spheres, 35% are oriented to only 1-2 spheres at least some of the time, and only 15% of the IPs are oriented to all spheres at least part of the time.

Figure 11: Orientation to person, place, and time (n=1,969)



### Key Points: Program Administration

- Fifteen public guardian programs are contracted to serve 2,208 IPs, with each program serving between 10 and 994 IPs.
- The average yearly state contribution is \$2,057,413 and contribution per program is \$137,161.
- As of September 1, 2008, programs had 93 full-time staff and 19 part-time staff.
- The majority of programs' monthly administrative time of 633 hours (mean = 246 hours) is spent on common office tasks, including telephone calls, mail, and maintaining files. Time spent traveling ranks second.
- The average yearly cost of serving an IP is \$2,648.
- Estimated total cost savings of the programs is **\$3,940,456**.
- The overall cost savings to the state of Florida (cost savings minus total state funding) is **\$1,883,043**.
- Significant quality of life savings for IPs included 15 offering clients emotional support and enhancing client socialization; 13 programs re-establishing relationships with family and friends; 13 programs securing needed medical care and/or equipment; 12 programs arranging client funerals and making appropriate placement from home to facility; 11 programs establishing residence for a homeless person; and 7 programs re-establishing religious affiliations.

### Key Points: IP Characteristics

- Approximately half of IPs are women (52%) and Caucasian (52%), with an average age of 66 years. Only 23% of IPs hold a high school diploma. A large portion of the IPs (41%) has annual incomes below \$5,499.
- The majority of IPs lives in skilled nursing facilities (59.8%) and assisted living facilities (22.7%) as the most common type of living arrangements.
- More than one-third (41%) of IPs have diagnosed psychiatric problems, neurological conditions (43%), and developmental conditions (48%).
- The majority of IPs requires assistance with ADLs, with the most frequent needs in the areas of bathing and dressing.
- Most of the IPs need help with IADLs in the areas of money management, meal preparation, taking medications, and laundry.
- The majority of IPs is cognitively disoriented in some spheres, with about 73% disoriented in at least one sphere some of the time.

## Recommendations

Based on the information analyzed above, the research team makes the following recommendations.

- Establish statewide coverage by public guardian programs in order to adequately serve all citizens of Florida. Forty-seven of 67 Florida counties (70%) have no public guardian service, no improved IP quality of life, and no cost savings associated with public guardianship.
- Promulgate program standards of practice as administrative regulations or organize program standards of practice into standard policies and procedures to which all programs should adhere: standardize IP assessment instruments, IP care plans, and time accounting mechanisms as electronic records.
- Increased fiscal support by the State of Florida is critical to the success of the programs and to reducing the substantial costs of not having statewide public guardianship.
- Thoroughly document tangible and intangible cost savings by all programs. The programs produce substantial cost savings to the state—**\$1,883,043** for one year. The programs pay for themselves in a single year.
- Programs should provide standardized administrative information (e.g., the administrative profile) at least annually, especially information regarding quality of life improvement and cost savings.
- With input from representatives of all programs, modify the existing State Guardianship Database in order to assure that accurate, comprehensive, and systematic reports of IPs and data on them is maintained and complete. Special attention should be given to design it so that: a) each IP has a unique identifying number to assure accurate reporting by the state and b) avoid as much as possible the “other” category in data fields. The database should automatically generate reports designed to improve the program’s efficiency and auditing as well as state reporting.
- Stressed above, efforts should be made to document all cost savings activities as accurately as possible. The centralized database is the ideal place to collect this information. Information should be accurately recorded, be as specific as possible (categories may need to be expanded), and properly dated, with duplicity avoided. “Research should be undertaken to measure successful practices and to examine how the guardianship process is enhancing the well-being of persons with diminished capacity. . . . The research should examine how the system is working” (Wingspan, 2002, p. 597).

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## Appendix A: Cost Savings Calculation Explanation

Cost savings were calculated on reported national and Florida specific estimates. The average cost of nursing homes and assisted living facilities in Florida was calculated based upon the 2008 MetLife Mature Market Institute® National Survey of Nursing Home and Assisted Living Costs (accessible at <http://www.metlife.com/mmi/>). The United States Department of Health & Human Service’s mean cost for all hospital stays in the nation for 2006 was used to estimate the daily cost and median stay of an acute hospital (accessible at <http://hcupnet.ahrq.gov/>). Finally, the state hospital cost was estimated based on the average daily cost of the Northeast Florida State Hospital provided by the Florida Department of Children and Families (accessible at [http://www.myflorida.com/cf\\_web/](http://www.myflorida.com/cf_web/)). The Northeast Florida State Hospital serves approximately half of Florida’s counties.

Action	Calculation	Cost
From SH to ALF	$(SH) \$233/day - (ALF) \$89/day = \$144 \times 30 \text{ days}$	\$4,320
From SH to NH	$(SH) \$233/day - (NH) \$191/day = \$42 \times 30 \text{ days}$	\$1,260
From AH to ALF	$(AH) \$1817/day - (ALF) \$89/day = \$1728 \times 3 \text{ days}$	\$5,184
From AH to NH	$(AH) \$1817/day - (SH) \$191/day = \$1626 \times 3 \text{ days}$	\$4878
Secure community-based services	\$100	\$100 1-Time

Assumptions:

1. Nursing home (NH) day = \$191
2. Assisted living facility (ALF) day= \$89
3. Acute hospital day (AH)= \$1,817
4. State hospital (SH) day = \$233 (This includes Psychiatric Hospitals)
5. Pre-paid funeral = \$6,000
6. \$100 one-time per client for securing community-based service to prevent moving to more restrictive environment
7. Patient would have stayed in state hospital for 30 days if not otherwise moved
8. Patient would have stayed in acute hospital for 3 days if not otherwise moved