

**The Wyoming Cost
of Financial Exploitation
2011, 2012 and 2013**

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December 2014

Introduction

The cost to victims of financial exploitation, both monetary and otherwise, continues to be an important consideration for all states and recently more states have assumed responsibility to compile information specific to the incidents of financial exploitation and the victims. National researchers have calculated that for every one reported financial exploitation case, 44 go unreported.¹

In estimating a range for the dollar amounts lost, the Department of Family Services, Adult Protective Services (DFS/APS) program, considered the above figures but made a conservative hypothesis of how many cases go unreported based on statistics from government officials and reports.² Those state that only one (1) out of every ten (10) seniors report abuse. Cases alleging exploitation that were not within DFS were not examined, and in that other agencies do receive reports regarding scams, insurance fraud, telemarketing fraud etc., subsequent cost of financial exploitation to Wyoming vulnerable adults would be higher than what is presented in this study.

This study is an effort to determine the financial impact on state systems in Wyoming. The variables examined were who made the referral, the perpetrator's relationship to the victim, type of financial exploitation, the method used by the perpetrator and the subsequent Medicaid eligibility.³ In addition, this study provides basic information as to projected cost to the governmental entities, to our seniors and vulnerable adults and to our financial institutions. The issues and concerns in this study reflect those also presented in the study completed in 2012.⁴

The study will provide information on the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 for those cases of financial exploitation which were substantiated on. A case is substantiated on when there is information and evidence gathered that constitutes a preponderance of evidence that the exploitation has occurred. The Department may substantiate if appropriate even if no criminal charges are made.⁵

In 2013 Wyoming created a financial checklist⁶ within our data system to assist caseworkers with summarizing specifics for the study. The system was set up so that upon notice of conclusion of the investigation an alert is sent to the caseworker to complete the checklist and the state office then receives an alert when it is completed for review. Despite this effort there is little information as to the outcomes for probable or pending criminal charges or an evaluation of how perpetrators access victims and their assets.

Prosecution of cases involving the financial exploitation of vulnerable adults is critical to protecting our most vulnerable population in Wyoming. It is essential that there be a collaborative effort on the part of APS, law enforcement and the judicial systems. The goal of every state should be that perpetrators are brought to justice.⁷

¹ www.westernjournalism.com/elder-financial-abuse (Terry Savage 8/26/2014)

² The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study. National Center on Elder Abuse

³ HCMS Group/2014/Wyoming Integrated WHIN Database

⁴ The Wyoming Cost of Financial Exploitation 2009-2010 Dorothy Thomas (3/2012)

⁵ W.S. 35-20-102 (xix)

⁶ APS Form 52 (WYCAPS)

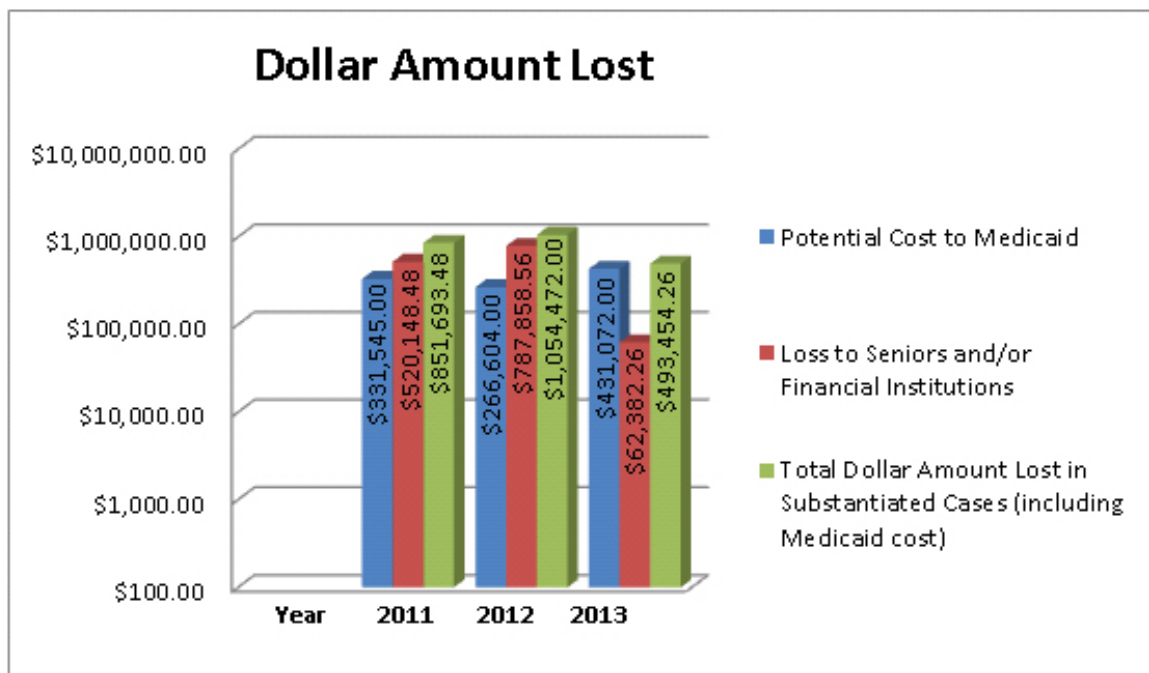
⁷ MAGIC Journal Volume 21, Number 2 Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults

It is critical for policy makers to realize the impact on victims, the related costs to the victims and the systems and to focus on prevention efforts in addition to effective prosecution and partnerships when conducting an investigation. Financial exploitation continues to have a huge impact on the lives of vulnerable adults nationally, and additional research is still needed to fully evaluate the impact on lives, the economic cost of exploitation and how to better target prevention efforts.⁸ In Wyoming, as in many states, it is a challenge to have cases effectively partnered with Law Enforcement and the Judicial System. Perceptions continue to view the allegations as civil, especially if the perpetrator is a family member when in fact prosecution on a criminal level may still be possible if not for exploitation then for fraud or larceny.

Cases reviewed for this study included 2011 ten (10), 2012 sixteen (16) and 2013 six (6). The charts developed included all three years so that a visible comparison could be provided.

In determining the cost of loss to Medicaid the average Medicaid cost for each year was utilized. Those averages provided were \$22,103 (2011), \$22,217 (2012) and \$22,688 (2013).⁹ The analysis included a projected life expectancy average¹⁰ of the individuals substantiated on based on the average age of the victims. This was the basis for the projected cost to Medicaid with an assumption that their losses would necessitate Medicaid coverage if eligible. The average age for 2011 was 73.5 with a life expectancy of an additional 15 years of life with the youngest victim 67 and the oldest 93 yrs. of age. In 2012 the average age was 78 with an additional 12 years of life projected. The eldest victim was 100 and the youngest was 57 yrs. of age. The average age for 2013 was 67 with an additional 19 years for life expectancy. The youngest victim was 28 and the oldest was 92 yrs. of age.¹¹

The charts provided will indicate the losses and the range of dollar amounts lost for all three (3) years so that this will be a comparative analysis in addition to year specific information being provided.



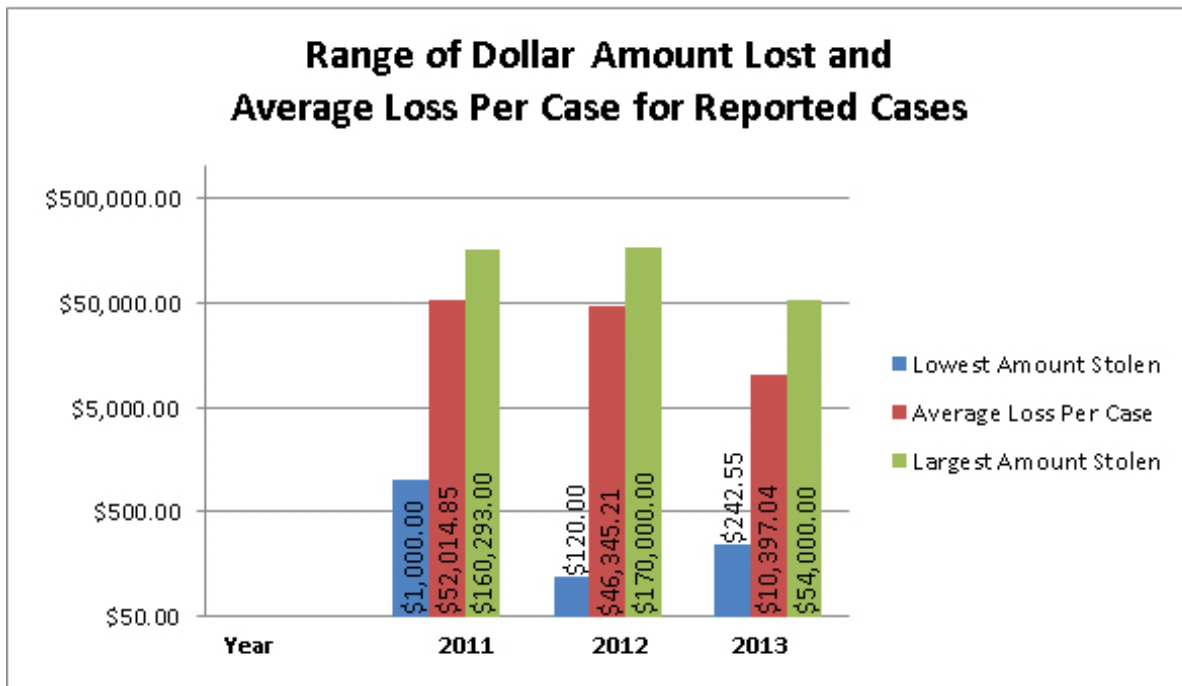
⁸ The National Center on Elder Abuse, <http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main Site/index>

⁹ Division of Health Care Financing/Wyoming

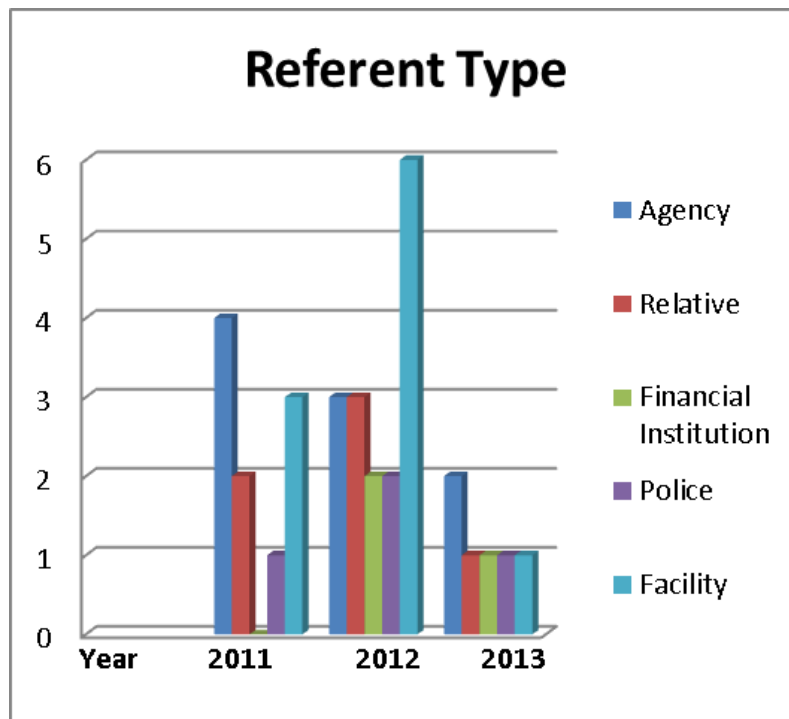
¹⁰ Wyoming State Data Center/Economic Analysis Division

¹¹ Department of Family Services Data System (Case narratives 2011-2013).

In terms of the dollar amount lost efforts were made, with limited success, to determine value of property and vehicles. The problem was in locating appropriate market values for the houses and in noting the years of the vehicles involved in the exploitation of the vulnerable adults.

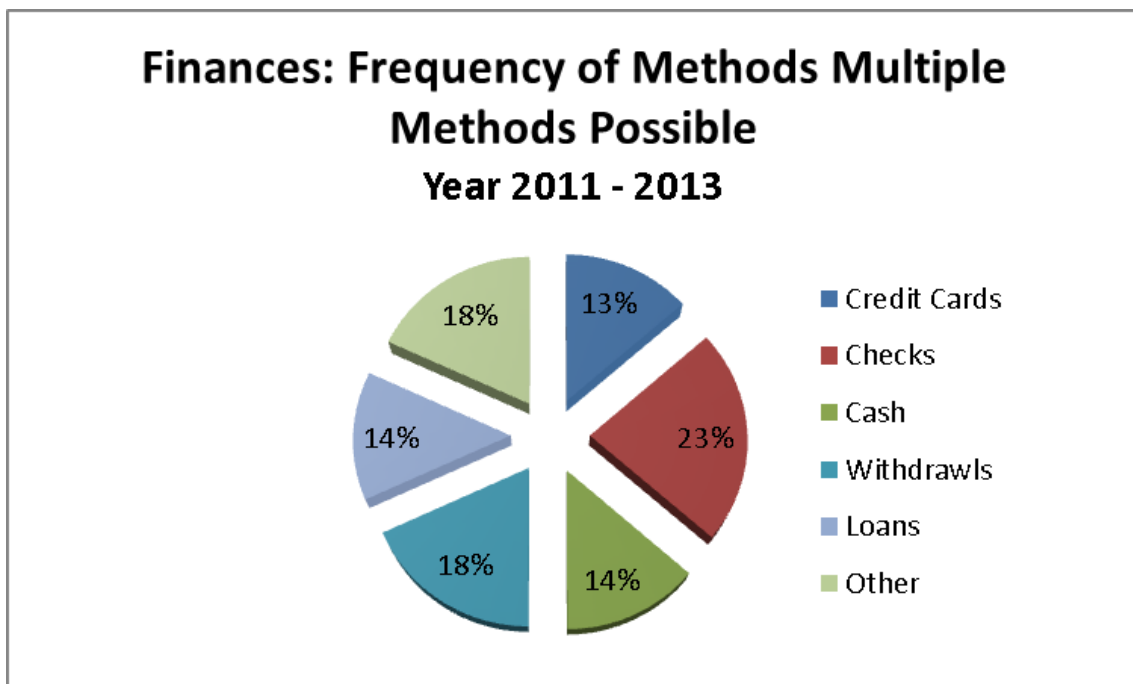


From those cases reviewed this chart will indicate who referred the case to the Department of Family Services. We eliminated the category of other which was used in the 2009-2010 report in that all those who reported were identified in this study and again reflect the diversity of the reporters to include agencies, family, facilities and financial institutions.



The methods used for exploitation varied in this study as in the previous study (2009-2010). Often the perpetrator used more than one method and often times verbal coercion was referenced in the narratives reviewed.¹² The percentage of other (14%) includes vehicles, property and monies owed to a nursing home. As stated, it was difficult to determine values of vehicles and property without more information being provided within the narratives reviewed.

Bank withdrawals continue to be the prevalent means of exploitation. Typically the withdrawals were made by family members accessing finances without permission from the victim. To address this problem, Utah created a monitory system whereby a third party has access to observe transactions within a vulnerable adult's account.¹³ Utah identified that it was estimated that 50% of the cases of exploitation there could have been identified and possibly prevented from occurring at all.



¹² WYCAPS narratives (2011-2013)

¹³ Navigating Your Rights: The Utah Legal Guide For Those 55 and Over(Jilene Gunther 2011)

2011 Summary

Using the Wyoming Integrated WHIN Database that contains person-centric information from the various state agencies, this analysis will identify the utilization of an individual on Wyoming state services before and after the individual was financially exploited.

The following state services (by agency) are included in the WHIN database:

- Department of Family Services: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER), Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), Out of Home Care, Child Care
- Department of Health: Medicaid
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Workforce Services: Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Development Training Fund, Vocational Rehabilitation

The population included ten(10) individuals with a financially exploited episode that began in 2011. The time period used in the analysis is one year prior to the financially exploited start date and eighteen months post the financially exploited end date. All of the states services in WHIN listed above were examined for utilization from the individuals. Time enrolled in Medicaid was used as a control when calculating per-member-per-month cost.

| Metric | Pre Period | | Financially Exploited Episode | Post Period | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | Months 7-12 | Months 0-6 | | Months* 0-6 | Months 7-12 | Months 13-18 |
| N | 1 | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Medicaid Medical Claimant PMPM Cost | \$3,531 | \$8,509 | | \$5,948 | \$4,914 | \$4,609 |
| Medicaid Drug Claimant PMPM Cost | \$37 | \$6 | | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total Cost | \$3,568 | \$25,544 | | \$17,844 | \$14,743 | \$18,434 |

**Includes the End of the Financially Exploited Episode*

Five (5) out of the ten (10) individuals, with a financially exploited episode, were not utilizing a state service in the analysis' timeframe. The remaining five (5) individuals were found only to be on Medicaid and not utilizing any other state services during the analysis' time frame with the exception of one (1) individual who also received assistance through the LIEAP program in 2010.

Overall costs to the State of Wyoming decreased 30% immediately after the exploited episode (post 0-6 months) from the previous six (6) month period and continued to decrease in months seven (7) to twelve (12).

2012 Summary

Using the Wyoming Integrated WHIN Database that contains person-centric information from the various state agencies, this analysis will identify the utilization of an individual on Wyoming state services before and after the individual was financially exploited.

The following state services (by agency) are included in the WHIN database:

- Department of Family Services: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER), Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), Out of Home Care, Child Care
- Department of Health: Medicaid, Mental Health, Substance Abuse
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Workforce Services: Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Development Training Fund, Vocational Rehabilitation

The population included sixteen (16) individuals with a financially exploited episode that began in 2012. The time period used in the analysis is one year prior to the financially exploited start date and twelve months post the financially exploited end date. All of the states services in WHIN listed above were examined for utilization from the individuals. Time enrolled in Medicaid was used as a control when calculating per-member-per-month cost.

| Metric | Pre Period | | Financially Exploited Date | Post Period | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Months 7-12 | Months 0-6 | | Months* 0-6 | Months 7-12 |
| N | 9 | 9 | | 9 | 6 |
| Medicaid Medical Claimant PMPM Cost | \$2,682 | \$3,132 | | \$4,375 | \$3,369 |
| Medicaid Drug Claimant PMPM Cost | \$16 | \$15 | | \$15 | \$0 |
| Total Cost | \$24,283 | \$28,322 | | \$39,518 | \$20,215 |

**Includes the Financially Exploited Date*

Six (6) out of the sixteen (16) individuals, with a financially exploited episode, were not utilizing a state service in the analysis' time frame. The remaining ten (10) individuals used Medicaid during the analysis' time frame. Two (2) of these ten(10) individuals also received assistance in SNAP, two (2) received assistance from LIEAP, and one(1) individual also participated in the Vocational Rehabilitation program.

Overall costs to the State of Wyoming increased 39% immediately after the exploited episode (post 0-6 months) from the previous six (6) month period and then began to decrease thereafter.

2013 Summary

Using the Wyoming Integrated WHIN Database that contains person-centric information from the various state agencies, this analysis will identify the utilization of an individual on Wyoming state services before and after the individual was financially exploited.

The following state services (by agency) are included in the WHIN database:

- Department of Family Services: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Personal Opportunities with Employment Responsibilities (POWER), Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP), Out of Home Care, Child Care
- Department of Health: Medicaid
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Workforce Services: Workers' Compensation, Unemployment Insurance, Workforce Investment Act, Workforce Development Training Fund, Vocational Rehabilitation

The population included six (6) individuals with a financially exploited episode that began in 2013. The time period used in the analysis is one (1) year prior to the financially exploited start date and six months post the financially exploited end date. The post period is limited to six (6) months after the exploited end date based on data availability at the time the report was ran (data through March 31, 2014). All of the states services in WHIN listed above were examined for utilization from the individuals. Time enrolled in Medicaid was used as a control when calculating per-member-per-month cost.

| Metric | Pre Period | | Financially Exploited Date | Post Period |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|-----------------|
| | Months 7-12 | Months 0-6 | | Months* 0-6 |
| N | 2 | 3 | | 3 |
| Medicaid Medical Claimant PMPM Cost | \$7,589 | \$4,762 | | \$5,330 |
| Medicaid Drug Claimant PMPM Cost | \$837 | \$544 | | \$859 |
| Total Cost | \$16,853 | \$15,918 | | \$18,568 |

**Includes the Financially Exploited Date*

Three (3) out of the six (6) individuals, with a financially exploited episode, were not utilizing a state service in the analysis' time frame. The remaining three (3) individuals were found to be on Medicaid during the analysis' time frame. Two (2) of those three (3) were not on any other state service, while one (1) individual also received assistance through SNAP before and after their exploited episode.

Overall costs to the State of Wyoming increased 16.6% immediately after the exploited episode (post 0-6 months) from the previous six (6) month period.

Reasons as to why costs decreased after the initial six (6) months were possibly that victims had moved, passed away, someone had replaced those monies lost, an expensive episode ended or another reason that could not be determined in the data.

Conclusion

As with the previous study (2009-2010) the benefit of this study is that it provides an overview of costs and projected costs to the State of Wyoming as a result of the victimization of vulnerable adults when financially exploited. The check list was implemented in 2013 and should serve as a tool for future studies and will provide more detailed information as to value of property and monies lost to the victims.

This study will be beneficial information to support the state wide development of Financial Abuse Specialist teams.¹⁴ Wyoming now has three (3) Financial Abuse Specialist teams and communities find the teams to be very helpful for caseworkers in the field as well as other agencies to collaborate on reports of alleged financial exploitation. The goal from this study is the implementation of additional teams state wide.

A benefit of this study is to have the information for training purposes and to educate policy makers, the legal system, families and individuals who are potentially vulnerable. The intent of this study is also to share the findings with the American Bar Association, the National Adult Protective Services Association, stakeholders, members of the State Adult Protective Services Team and with members of the Wyoming Supreme Court.

¹⁴ www.ncea.aoa/stop_abuse_teams