

Vulnerable Adult Act Redesign Phase I

This bill is the first phase of a stakeholder-led, multi-year project to modernize the vulnerable adult protection statute.

- The Vulnerable Adult Act (VAA) hasn't been updated in over 40 years.
 - The statute protects older adults and people with disabilities who are vulnerable to abuse, neglect or financial exploitation.
 - More than 260 stakeholders (the VAA re-design stakeholder group) worked to get input on how to develop a more person-centered and equity-based adult protection system by redesigning the role of adult protective services (APS) under the Vulnerable Adult Act.
- Modifies the definition of neglect to eliminate the presumption of responsibility based only on a family/spousal relationship and to clarify that vulnerable adults are in need of protective services if they are unable to meet their own needs.
- Increases the responsibility of counties to share information with guardians and/or health care agents.
- Clarifies investigation duties for lead investigative agencies.
- Adds that counties must make their guidelines for accepting vulnerable adult reports available to the public. This will:
 - Add consistency and transparency so vulnerable adults and families know which reports may meet a county's threshold for services and investigation.
 - Help vulnerable adults and families understand why some reports are not accepted and 'screened out'.

Amendment

- Supports county authority under the VAA to share data with other lead investigative agencies, tribes when the vulnerable adult is a tribal member and with a case manager when the vulnerable adult has a case manager.
- Allows county agencies to offer assistance to the reporter, or the person subject to the report, when the report is not accepted for adult protective services or an investigation.
- This bill also emphasizes connecting individuals to services (rather than investigations) which will be an improvement for family caregivers.
 - This will change the focus from investigation of who is responsible for the maltreatment when there is an informal caregiver, to families and vulnerable adults getting help and connected to services.