NAMRS

NATIONAL ADULT MALTREATMENT REPORTING SYSTEM

NAMRS FFY 2016
Background Report

May 5, 2018

Acknowledgements[1]

The Administration for Community Living gratefully acknowledges the voluntary submission of data to the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS) by the States, District of Columbia, and Territories. Without the support of the Adult Protective Services staff, supervisors, and program administrators' collection of data and reporting into state systems, it would have been impossible to have achieved the historical, first submission of data (FFY 2016) into the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System.

In addition, we applaud the work of the:
- Elder Justice Coordinating Council in making the collection of data regarding adult maltreatment a priority issue;
- Department of Health and Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation for support of the initial development and piloting of NAMRS; and
- Numerous experts, university faculty, medical researchers, and national organizations representing the field of adult maltreatment who provided guidance on NAMRS development.

Contents

Executive Summary

The idea of a national reporting system for adult abuse, similar to the system for child abuse reporting has been discussed for decades, and recommended as a prerequisite to data-driven policy development for adult protective services. The absence of national data for research and best practice development has been cited by numerous entities, including the Government Accountability Office [1], as a significant barrier to improving APS programs. A national reporting system provides consistent, accurate national data on the exploitation and abuse of older adults and adults with disabilities, as reported to state APS agencies. Policy makers, APS programs, and researchers can use the data to evaluate and improve programs.

In 2013, the leadership of HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) and Administration for Community Living (ACL) directed the development and piloting of an adult abuse reporting system based on data from state APS agency information systems. The project was funded by ACL through an interagency agreement with ASPE, and carried out under a contract to WRMA, Inc. The project team conducted extensive outreach to gain an understanding of information needs. More than 40 state administrators, researchers, service providers, and other individuals in the field participated in stakeholder calls. Over 30 state representatives from 25 states participated in three in-person working sessions to discuss the uses of collected data and the key functionalities that should be included in a national system.

The system, called the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System (NAMRS), was developed from September, 2013 through December, 2014. Nine states voluntarily pilot tested NAMARS from January, 2015 through May, 2015. Pilot site feedback informed refinements made to the system from June, 2015 through September, 2015. A final report of the pilot phase was published by ASPE in September 2015.

From October 2015 through February 2017, ACL, through its Adult Protective Services (APS) Technical Assistance Resource Center (APS TARC), operated by WRMA, Inc., refined and built the final system and provided training and technical assistance to all states in preparation of the first NAMRS submission. States, the District of Columbia, and five territories received training and assistance in preparation for and during their submission of FFY 2016 information and data. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget gave approval for submission of data in March 2017 (#0985-0054). Fifty-four out of 56 APS reporting jurisdictions, or "states,"[2] volunteered to participate the first year.

NAMRS is designed as an annual, voluntary system to collect both summary and de-identified, case-level data on APS investigations. NAMRS data is a combination of data that most states typically collect, along with data elements not historically gathered at the state level, such as case-level data. The NAMRS pilot and consultations with APS administrators confirmed that states would be able to map state data definitions to NAMRS data definitions and, in collaboration with

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[2] For NAMRS, a reporting jurisdiction is the officially designated APS office in each state, territory, or district. In this report, APS reporting jurisdictions will be referred to as "states" for ease of reading. The term "states" includes the District of Columbia and territories.

their local APS programs, to provide many of the data elements. NAMRS consists of three components:

1. *Agency Component,* comprised of agency information such as state statutes, policies, and practices.

2. *Key Indicator Component*, consisting of aggregated data on key statistics of investigations and victims, clients, and perpetrators provided by states that are unable to provide case-level data.

3. *Case Component*, provided by states that have report-level tracking systems, is comprised of data on client characteristics, services, and perpetrator characteristics, pertaining to each report that is screened-in and investigated by APS.

States voluntarily submit data to NAMRS in one of the following combinations for the Federal Fiscal Year reporting period, as illustrated below.
- Agency Component only;
- Agency Component and Key Indicators; or
- Agency Component and Case Component data.
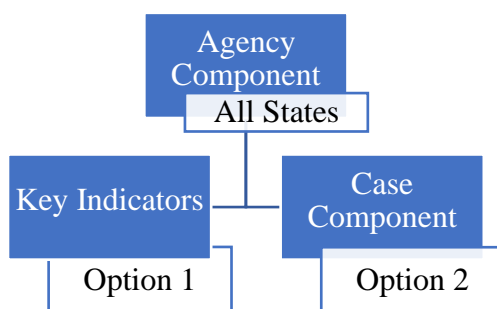
NAMRS Data Reports

NAMRS data reports are presented in four parts, described below. The first report was released on August 22, 2017. A re-release of that report, along with the other 3 reports were released in April 2018.

NAMRS FY 2016 Background

This report discusses the development of the NAMRS data system, provides an overview of the data elements and the data submission process, and discusses the known limitations of NAMRS.

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 1.2: Agency

On August 22, 2017, ACL released NAMRS Report 1, providing highlights of information and investigation data submitted for FFY 2016. Since its release, one state has updated FFY 2016 Key Indicators data. This resubmission changed the data previously released in Report 1, and those updates are reflected in "NAMRS FY 2016 Report 1.2: Agency."

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 2: Key Indicators

Report 2: Key Indicators Report presents data from 44 states, a combination of data from 20 states that provided aggregate Key Indicator data and 24 other states that provided case-level data for the same key indicator elements. The aggregated data pertains to client, victim, and perpetrators.

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 3: Case Components

Report 3: Case Component provides a summary of case level information for investigations of maltreatments, clients, victims, services, and perpetrators. Additionally, Report 3 presents a review of cross tabulations of certain data elements relevant to victims with substantiated maltreatment.

Looking to the Future

The primary objective of NAMRS is to collect data to understand the conditions, contributing factors, and outcomes of persons who experience abuse, neglect, and exploitation and receive an investigation by APS. As reporting to NAMRS grows, especially for case component data, we begin to build the information base necessary to improve prevention, interventions, and services for those persons. Through technical assistance, training, and other opportunities, ACL will continue supporting states as they strive to increase the quality of the data they collect. Furthermore, it is anticipated that state information systems will evolve to facilitate reporting a larger number of data elements to NAMRS. As experienced in the first year, this evolution is happening at a very rapid pace.

For more information about NAMRS or requesting NAMRS data sets, please direct inquiries to ACL Program Officer: Stephanie.WhittierEliason@acl.hhs.gov.

Development of the National Adult Maltreatment Reporting System

The idea of a national reporting system for adult abuse, similar to the system for child abuse reporting has been discussed for decades. The absence of national data for research and best practice development has been cited by numerous entities, including the Government Accountability Office [1]- [2] as a significant barrier to improving APS programs. A national reporting system provides consistent, accurate national data on the exploitation and abuse of older adults and adults with disabilities, as reported to state APS agencies. Policy makers, APS programs, and researchers can use the data to evaluate and improve programs.

In 2013, the leadership of the HHS Administration for Community Living (ACL) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) directed the development and piloting of an adult abuse reporting system based on data from state APS agency information systems. The project was funded by ACL through an interagency agreement with ASPE. The project team conducted extensive outreach to gain an understanding of information needs. More than 40 state administrators, researchers, service providers, and other individuals in the field participated in stakeholder calls. Over 30 representatives from 25 state APS offices participated in three, in-person working sessions to discuss the uses of collected data and the key functionalities that should be included in a national system. ACL contracted with WRMA, Inc. to develop and pilot a system. The test version of the NAMRS was piloted in nine (9) states from January through May 2015. For more information about the development of NAMRS, please see the final report of the pilot phase published by ASPE.

From October 2015 through February 2017, ACL, with the support of the APS Technical Assistance Resource Center (APS TARC) operated by WRMA, Inc., refined and built the final system and provided training and technical assistance to states in preparation of the first NAMRS submission. All states, the District of Columbia, and the five U.S. territories received training and assistance in preparation for and during their submission of FFY 2016 information and data. The U.S. Office of Management and Budget gave approval for submission of data in March 2017 (#0985-0054).

NAMRS Definitions and Data Sources

In developing NAMRS, ACL recognized that there were significant variations across state APS programs, and that definitions for commonly used words and descriptors for the work of APS also differed. Core issues needing consideration, included:

- *Variability in Who is Served*
  State statutes establish the criteria for determining eligibility for adult protective services. Some state statutes require that all adults 18 years of age and older with reported alleged maltreatments will receive an investigation, and if needed, protective services. Other state statutes may have more specific parameters for who is served. For example, the age threshold for eligibility might be set at 60 years of age and older, or only adults 18 to 59

years old with a developmental disability. Some state statutes might limit APS eligibility to adults living in the community, and identify a different entity to handle reports for abuse of those living in institutions.

- *Variability in Program Policies and Procedures*
  Each state has promulgated their own laws, regulations, policies, and procedures to give guidance to staff, and no two states are the same. For example, there are differences across the states as to when an investigation should be opened based on alleged reported circumstances, the steps that constitute the beginning of an investigation, requirements for making contact with or visiting the client, and the number of days for completion of an investigation.

- *Variability in Handling Reports*
  Many states require that all reports of alleged maltreatments be investigated, and an official determination be made as to whether the allegation can be substantiated. A few state statutes do not require an investigation in all circumstances. Some states do not require that the APS staff enter an official determination of the alleged maltreatment report. Rather, in these states APS assesses a person for risk of maltreatment, or need for protective services.

- *Variability in Recording Information*
  Prior to the creation of NAMRS, there had never been a national reporting system for adult maltreatment, nor an attempt to standardize a set of terminology for APS. In this absence, states created their own information systems to collect data based on state guidelines and definitions. While APS caseworkers collect a great deal of information vital to serving the client, most of the reporting requirements at the state level have been for administrative data, such as the number of persons served. As a result, methods and policies for collecting, retaining, and reporting information and data vary significantly across the states, and often within the states from county to county.

To inform the development of the NAMRS data elements, the project team carried out a number of activities. The team reviewed different nomenclatures and similar data elements collected by other national reporting systems. For example, seven data collection efforts were examined to assist in identifying topics for inclusion in NAMRS and in formulating definitions and key values for the data elements:

- Two efforts were child-specific reporting systems in child welfare: the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System and the National Youth in Transition Database.

- Three efforts were program performance reporting systems from the field of aging services: the National Aging Program Information System State Program Reports, the National Ombudsman Reporting System, and the National Aging Program Information System Senior Medicare Patrols Project.

- Two were data collection initiatives addressing services for persons with intellectual disabilities: the National Core Indicators program comprised of adult and family surveys and

- the National Residential Information Systems Project, which collects aggregated data through a survey of states and selected state residential facilities serving individuals with developmental disabilities.

General guidance was derived from research studies and papers produced by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Office of Management and Budget, HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Justice. At the end of this report is a "Selected Bibliography" of resources that informed the development of the definitions and values, and a more extensive list is included in *Appendix B: Laws, Rules, Regulations, and Guidance Sources.*

Understanding NAMRS definitions for specific elements is vital to understanding these reports As illustration, below is a short list of terms and the definitions used in NAMRS. A full list of NAMRS definitions may be found in *Appendix A: Data Element and Value Definitions,* and the reader is encouraged to refer to Appendix A as they read the reports. For NAMRS:

- A **client** is a person who receives an investigation by APS based on an alleged maltreatment report.

- A **victim** is a client who received an investigation and one or more maltreatment substantiations were made by APS.

- A **perpetrator** is the person connected to the substantiated maltreatment of the victim.

- Age groupings were based on several factors. For victims, the population groups served by APS are typically 18 years of age and older; 18 to 59 years; 60 and older; or 65 and older. Taken into consideration were the age criteria for services provided through funding and eligibility criteria of the Older Americans Act, Medicare and Medicaid, and Social Security Act, with no further age groupings after age 85, to best protect any possible personal identifiable information (PII) being linked to any one victim. For perpetrators, the age groupings are the same as victims, except with the addition of age 17 and younger.

- The **race** and **ethnicity** demographic data for victims and perpetrators are based upon the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's 1997 approval for these data to be collected by U.S. Census Bureau.

- The data element for **Victims with Disabilities** is premised upon the U.S. Census Bureau's "American Community Survey" descriptions, encompassing hearing, vision, cognition, ambulation, self-care, and independent living.

- The **Victims Receiving Benefits** data element was derived from various U.S. government reporting agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and Veterans Administration.

- The data element **Victim with Behavioral Conditions** was derived from the *American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*.

- The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics and the Elder Justice Act was reviewed to inform the data element, **Substitute Decision Makers**. The American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging's staff provided input and guidance on the data elements pertaining to **Victim with Guardian or Conservator** and **Perpetrator with Legal Remedy Recommendation**.

Data Submissions

NAMRS is designed as an annual, voluntary system to collect both summary and de-identified, case-level data on APS investigations. NAMRS receives data from the highest designated APS office in the state, territory, or district. For ease of reading, NAMRS data reports refers to these entities as "states". NAMRS data is a combination of data that most states typically collect, along with aspirational data not historically gathered at the state-level. The NAMRS pilot and consultations with APS administrators confirmed that states would be able to map state data definitions to NAMRS data definitions and, in collaboration with their local APS programs, to provide many of the data elements. NAMRS consists of three components:

1. *Agency Component,* comprised of agency information such as state statutes, policies, and practices.

2. *Key Indicator Component*, consists of aggregated data on key statistics of investigations, victims, clients, and perpetrators provided by states that are unable to provide case-level data.

3. *Case Component*, provided by states that have case-level tracking capability at the state-level, is comprised of data on client characteristics, services, and perpetrator characteristics for each report closed in the NAMRS reporting period (the previous federal fiscal year). In order to submit case component data, states have to be able to submit five (5), "required" data elements:
   - Unique investigation identifier;
   - Case closure date;
   - Unique client identifier;
   - Maltreatment type;
   - Maltreatment disposition;
   - Unique perpetrator identifier (if perpetrator information is submitted).

The FFY 2016 NAMRS Reports series included information derived from the submissions of information and data by 48 states, the District of Columbia, and the five territories, totaling 54 reporting jurisdictions (referred to as "states" in this report). States submit data to NAMRS in one of the following combinations for the Federal Fiscal Year reporting period, as illustrated below.
   - Agency Component only;

- Agency Component and Key Indicators; or
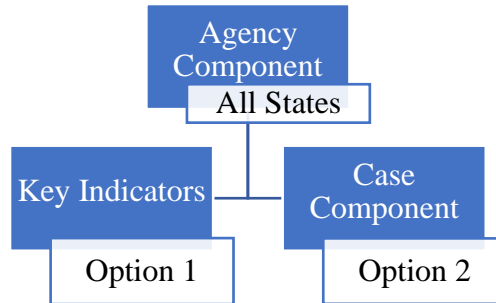- Agency Component and Case Component data.

Figure 1. NAMRS Data Submission Decision Tree

All states that participated in FFY 2016 submitted the Agency Component. States could submit Case Component data if their automated information system allowed for extraction of investigation specific case-level data. If unable to provide detailed data, states submitted aggregated counts via the Key Indicator Component.

"Exhibit 1. NAMRS Component Response Rates" provides details on the reporting in each of the components for FFY 2016. Twenty-four (24) states provided Agency and Case Components. Twenty (20) states provided Agency and Key Indicators Component. Ten (10) states provided Agency Component only. Two entities elected not to participate.

Exhibit 1. NAMRS Component Response Rates

Number of States, District, and Territories participated in FFY 2016:				**54**
Component	# of states that submitted	% of states (56)	# of States and District	# of Territories
Agency Only	10	17.9%	7	3
Agency and Key Indicators	20	35.7%	18	2
Agency and Case	24	42.9%	24	-
Did not participate	2	3.6%	2	-

NAMRS Data Reports

NAMRS FY 2016 data reports are presented in four parts, described below. The first report was released on August 22, 2017. That report, along with the other 3 reports were released in 2018.

NAMRS FY 2016 Background Report

This report discusses the development of the NAMRS data system, provides an overview of the data elements and the data submission process, and discusses the known limitations of NAMRS.

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 1.2: Agency

The Agency Component data is a wealth of information about the uniqueness of each state APS program, including state policy and practice information. In addition to the data elements, states provided narrative descriptions regarding statutes, policies and procedures, investigative practices, data systems, intake processes, staffing, training, and client assessments.

On August 22, 2017, ACL released NAMRS Report 1, providing highlights of information and investigation data submitted for FFY 2016. Since its release, one state has updated FFY 2016 Key Indicators data. This resubmission changed the data previously released in Report 1, and those updates are reflected in NAMRS Report 1.2: Agency.

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 2: Key Indicators

Report 2: Key Indicators Report provides high-level aggregate data on key statistics of investigations and victims. The information represents data from 44 states and is a combination of data from 20 states that provided aggregate Key Indicator data and 24 other states that provided case-level data for the same data elements. The aggregated data pertains to client, victim, and perpetrators.

NAMRS FY 2016 Report 3: Case Components

Report 3: Case Component provides a summary of case level information for investigations of maltreatments, clients, victims, services, and perpetrators. Additionally, Report 3 presents a review of cross tabulations of certain data elements relevant to victims with a substantiated maltreatment. For FFY 2016 data was received from 24 states. Report 3: Case Component includes data on 56 Case Component data elements, divided across five categories:

1. *Investigation*—each investigation undertaken by APS with a case closure date during the reporting period

2. *Client*—each person subject of an investigation. The client may have multiple investigations in the reporting period.

3. *Maltreatment Allegation*—each maltreatment associated with each client. Maltreatment type and maltreatment disposition are required reporting elements.

4. *Perpetrator*—each person alleged responsible for one or more maltreatments with a disposition of substantiated.

5. *Client-Perpetrator Relationship*—the relationship between the client, who is the victim of a substantiated maltreatment, and the perpetrator.

In addition to the submission data, Report 3: Case Component contains further analyses of data pertaining to victims and substantiated maltreatments, and perpetrator characteristics.

Limitations

In developing NAMRS, stakeholders concurred with ACL to include some aspirational data elements in the national reporting system. The project team considered data that already is collected routinely at the state-level, as well as data that states could collect in the future to inform the growth and evolution of data collected by APS programs. For example, although individual APS case workers might gather a great deal of information about alleged victims and perpetrators over the course of an investigation, state-level reporting systems collect and report more information about victims than information about perpetrators. In later years, the NAMRS database will have more information on perpetrators once states are able to add more data elements to their state-level information collection systems, and once more staff are trained on collecting and reporting of perpetrator data.

The information and data provided in the reports are reflective of the information and data states provided for this historical first submission of FFY 2016 data. In this first year of a new, national reporting system, care was taken in the writing of these reports to explain how many states were able to submit certain types of information; the percentage of individual data elements provided; and to describe limitations discovered when reviewing data. For FY 2016, no state could provide all Case Component, nor all Key Indicators, data elements. Also, no two states reported on all of the same data elements. However, states were encouraged to provide as much information as possible.

Because NAMRS was developed to allow maximum flexibility for states to be able to report data in a way that did not increase burden for the states' participation, data contained in the exhibit tables will not always total 100%. Agency and Key Indicator data have aggregate totals, which contain duplicate counts of clients, victims, and perpetrators. The Case Component data, conversely, are unique. Case Component data consists of client characteristics, services, and perpetrator characteristics, provided by states that have report-level tracking systems.

Differences across states' statute and policies further contribute to the inability to compare data across the NAMRS FY 2016 Reports. For example, it is practice in some states to include multiple clients under one investigation, rather than opening a separate case for each client, even if it is one investigation. The APS agency may have received one report of alleged abuse for two people living in the same household. This could be recorded in two different ways, depending on the state. One way is to open one investigation record with two clients. Alternatively, two investigation records could be opened, one for each client in the household.

When possible, we have identified where these differences may appear, such as in the example above. However, for these reasons, readers are advised against attempting to compare or combine data reported in Agency, Key Indicator, or Case Components.

Looking Ahead

The primary objective of NAMRS is to collect data to understand the conditions, contributing factors, and outcomes of persons who experience abuse, neglect, and exploitation and receive an

investigation by APS. As reporting to NAMRS grows, especially for case component data, we begin to build the information base necessary to improve prevention, interventions, and services for those persons.

ACL is committed to the Office of Management and Budget Information Quality Guidelines (2002) for the attributes of data quality—utility, objectivity, and integrity. Given the variation among APS agencies, there is a need for careful and methodical mapping of state information systems to NAMRS. Through technical assistance, training, and other opportunities, ACL will continue supporting states in this process as they strive to increase the quality of the data they collect. Furthermore, it is anticipated that state information systems will evolve to facilitate reporting a larger number of data elements to NAMRS. As experienced in the first year, this evolution is happening at a very rapid pace.

For more information about NAMRS or requesting NAMRS data sets, please direct inquiries to ACL Program Officer: Stephanie.WhittierEliason@acl.hhs.gov.

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