



## January 2026 APS TARC Podcast Transcript

# Interstate Cooperation/Coordination Across APS Programs

## Introduction

**Andrew Capehart:** Welcome to the Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center podcast. We come to you with the goal of sharing promising practices and innovations from the adult protective services field, and to highlight what is achievable with new ideas and partnerships to help you envision what may be replicated in your program. Let's join our host, Jennifer Spoeri, APS TARC subject matter expert, and guests in conversation.

## Discussion

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Welcome to the APS Technical Assistance Resource Center podcast. As many listeners may know, APS clients may, at times, move across state borders during an APS investigation, or even while care planning. Identifying appropriate agencies among state APS programs near one another creates a framework for effectively communicating, reporting, and investigating these cases. This framework supports cooperation and collaboration to work with and for APS clients who have been reported to have been abused, neglected, and/or financially exploited. Today, we'll speak with Nancy Alterio, the executive director at the Disabled Persons Protection Commission in Massachusetts, and Dorian Long, the social services program administration manager at the Connecticut Department of Social Services. We'll discuss their work in the northeastern part of the U.S. and what they've done to better serve APS clients through cooperation and coordination across APS programs. Before we dig into the meat of our conversation, though, can each of you share with our listeners a little background on your career and work with APS? Nancy, let's start with you.

**Nancy Alterio:** Happy to. Thanks, Jennifer, and thanks for the introduction, and thank you for asking Dorian and myself to talk about our Northeast I collaborative work. As you mentioned, I work for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission, otherwise known as DPPC. DPPC is a statewide Massachusetts agency responsible for the investigation and remediation of abuse and neglect committed against adults with disabilities between the ages of 18 and 59. We are one of a few states in the country that has a bifurcated adult protective service system, APS system. The Executive Office of Aging and Independence here in Massachusetts responds to abuses of older adults, adults 60 years and older. I started with the DPPC some time ago, back in 1999. Prior to 1999 I had spent my career working with persons with disabilities, but honestly, I had no significant knowledge of APS. In my search for understanding and knowledge, I came across NAPSA and people doing like work, and a wonderful partnership was formed. And that's a little bit about me.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Okay, great. I started just a few years after you, Nancy, so Dorian, tell us about your path to APS.



**Dorian Long:** Well, my path to APS actually started in child welfare, so I'm a social worker by training. In the first 10 years of my career, I spent at our state Agency for Child Protection, my role was somewhat unique in that I worked in the unit that oversaw kind of the health management activities of kids in child welfare, including the management of their health care access under Medicaid programs. And then I moved on to do transitioning of adults or young adults from the child welfare system into adult systems, including our mental health agencies, agencies that support folks with developmental disabilities, and our social service agency where I work now regarding transitions to folks that need assistance related to brain injury. So my entree into the social service realm over here in adult world really centered around brain injury. So I started off in a unit where I was the lead for Medicaid waiver for brain injury, but also included the oversight of certain offices across all programs, including protective services. So for us in Connecticut, we administer a program that serves elders only, beginning at age 60. So we do not have APS system for folks over 18 and under the age of 60. So we're quite unique in that, I think there's like two of us left, so I'm not sure where that's going to go in the future, but I've been with the department since 2004 and became director of the division and overseeing all programs, including APS in 2007. So I've been here for a minute and, and again, NAPSA is just a lifeline of wonderful information, great collaboration. Nancy was kind of my entree into our work on the New England team. We got an email. What's this lady? Nancy? What is she sending me? And inviting me to participate on, you know, our regional rep group, which I found to be wonderful and, and that's when I learned about the memorandum and everything related to that. So it's been a great journey. The population that we serve, you know, have a lot of needs, and it's a lot of a lot of strain, but there's a lot of outcomes that we are very proud of in the work that we do, and seeing all the innovation that happens across the country, you know, through NAPSA and through our colleagues across the country. I really appreciate the opportunity to be in this field and make the differences that we can here in Connecticut for folks impacted by maltreatment.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Great. Well, thank you. Yeah, I that this the genesis of this group is the NAPSA regional group, and I really appreciate Andy and the TARC for having us be able to broadcast and tell everybody about this. So I'd first like to kick us off by mentioning that the Northeast One region memorandum of agreement that we'll be discussing actually predates interstate initiatives that are included in the Grassley Blumenthal. Blumenthal is a Connecticut guy, Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act (EAPPA), which passed on a bipartisan basis and the president signed into law in 2017. The bill was the result of over 10 years of efforts to address elder abuse and fraud at the federal level. And there's two sections of the act that explicitly mentioned protective services, or adult protective services, which always gets us all excited that, oh my gosh, APS is in there, you know. But one part of it says the consent of Congress is given to any two or more states acting through state agencies with jurisdiction over APS to enter into agreements or compacts for cooperative agreement or effort and mutual assistance in promoting the safety and well-being of elders and in enforcing their respective laws and policies to promote such safety and well-being. And the other section talks about the executive director of the State Justice Institute in consultation with state or local APS, aging, social, human services, or law enforcement agencies, nationally recognized nonprofit associations with expertise in data sharing among criminal justice



agencies and familiarity with the issues raised in elder abuse cases, or the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall submit to Congress legislative proposals relating to the facilitation of interstate agreements and compacts.

So in a nutshell, this gives us clearance to go ahead and enter into these memorandum of agreements across the country now, and Northeast, obviously, is packed in. I remember there was a map on my elementary school playground of the United States and the Northeast always tripped me up, because you guys have so many little states up there, but other states, you know, we all have borders, and we all have these clients are mobile there. I feel like they're getting more and more mobile. This is really an, an interesting and groundbreaking agreement that you all did before it was even made into the act. So bravo to Northeast.

Let's talk now about the memorandum of agreement, or MOA, formally titled the MOA for the Reporting and Protection of Abuse Victims with Disabilities and/or Elders Across Northeast One State Jurisdictions. So Dorian, what are the goals of this MOA? Where did it come from?

**Dorian Long:** Yeah, so the goal really is in the spirit of collaboration, right? So we want to collaborate on care, to support the protection, treatment, continuity of support for elders and persons with disabilities who are in need of protective services. So that's first, right? We want to ensure that we have an effective response, right, so that we are, you know, prompt in reporting and investigating issues of maltreatment, because timeliness is, is of upmost important in our work, right? And then interstate cooperation, right? We want to make sure that we're able to strengthen communication and collaboration across the Northeast, you know, agencies that provide this service. And I think because we are small and we meet regularly, I think that that cooperation piece is kind of built in, but it's nice to have the structure around it with the memorandum. And then again, we want to also push, you know, public awareness and make sure that folks are aware of maltreatment of persons who are elders or persons with disabilities. So those are the key goals of the memorandum.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Great, thank you. And I love how we are all getting used to an APS saying and persons with disabilities, because for a long time, there's focus on elder but quarter to a third of our cases in APS are people with disabilities 18 to 59 so that's something good to remind everyone, and I'm doing it while Nancy's on the call. She'll keep us straight.

**Nancy Alterio:** Yeah, it wasn't always like that. You know when I, you know, as I mentioned earlier in my introduction, when I first reached out to NAPSA, even though, within the mission, it was inclusive of persons with disabilities, it that wasn't the case with regards to the conferences. But I have to tell you, they were extremely open-minded and accepting. And as soon as I said, hey, don't forget, the 18 to 59 they're like, absolutely.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** It's important.

**Nancy Alterio:** Yeah, yeah.



**Jennifer Spoeri:** They can be as vulnerable, if not more sometimes, you know. So it's good stuff. So Nancy, how about a little background on how this came to be? What, how did this MOA come to be born?

**Nancy Alterio:** Sure, yeah, and again, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, I knew very little about adult protective services, but I found NAPSA, and that's where the collaboration began with me. And talk about a blast from the past, Jennifer, I had the pleasure of meeting Ricker Hamilton when I first came on to adult protective services here in Massachusetts. And as you know, Ricker Hamilton, he was my counterpart in Maine, and he was very receptive, invited me in. And at the time, he was not only the head of Maine's APS program, but he was also NAPSA's Northeast One regional rep, and he introduced me to NAPSA. He welcomed me and he introduced me to the other Northeast One representatives, and they were a wealth of knowledge and support for me throughout the years. The NAPSA Northeast One was a group of folks I could reach out to at any time, day or night, and they would always be available. I was instantly invited to attend their quarterly meetings, and three of those quarterly meetings were held by telephone conference call, and one of those meetings where I have was held in person, and that's really where the there's nothing like a face-to-face meeting, and that's really where the collaboration grew and was strengthened, and that I at that time, back in the early 2000s I had the time of meeting Lynn Coons from New Hampshire, Joyce Hall from Rhode Island, talk about a one-woman show she was running. She had very little supports internally, but she could reach out to NAPSA or the Northeast folks and Dorian from Connecticut. Dorian I had the opportunity to work with and so many others.

And during these meetings, we would share state highlights, we would share state challenges. We would talk about resources and we would offer support to one another. During one of those meetings, I introduced the group to DPPC's memorandum of understanding (MOU) that we had recently signed on to with the 11 district attorneys and three of the state disability service providing agencies and the Massachusetts State Police. And in discussing the Massachusetts statewide MOU with law enforcement, adult protective services, and state service providing agencies, Ricker Hamilton came up with the idea of developing a Northeast One MOU, and as you mentioned, it's now an MOA. And so not a memorandum of understanding, but an MOA. And we all thought it was a great idea. All the Northeast One states said, let's do this. And they all sent me their pertinent information to include in the Northeast One MOU, MOA. I pulled it all together and drafted it, and then in 2004 I mailed out the hard copies for signature. Wow, we're going back 22 years. So I mailed out the hard copies, they were asked to sign one, you know, for each state. When I got them all back, I sent an original back to every state. So talk about how far we've come in our ability to do digital work.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, that's awesome.

**Nancy Alterio:** Two years.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Mailed out the hard copies. That's incredible. Technology has been a blessing. We're sitting here doing this on Zoom, and I can see your face now, the listeners are just going to hear us. But yes, that's incredible.



**Nancy Alterio:** When we send out the MOA, a memorandum of agreement, you know, we can get it back in the same day.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah.

**Nancy Alterio:** A couple days, but it took a little, little longer.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** That is so cool. I love to hear the history of it. When I started in APS in 2003 there were still handwritten notes. We were transferring over to a system online but, you know, it was, it was money. APS needed money for that tech to get all of these systems up and running. So, yes, fascinating. Alright, well, Dorian, I, I'm going to ask you about any hiccups along the way, like, is there any formal review process or any hiccups with leadership?

**Dorian Long:** So operationally, we haven't experienced challenges as far as being able to utilize the memorandum once in place. What we find is sometimes when leadership changes at agencies to kind of educate folks. So when new agency leaders come in, you know, we may have to socialize the concept again, and sometimes it's easy and sometimes it's a challenge. You know, different states have reported different experiences. In Connecticut, we've not encountered such issues, and we always share the document with our legal team each time prior to presenting for signature just to make sure that we're covered, and things go through without a hitch. So we're grateful for that. And I think again, leadership at all of our agencies, they want us to have, you know, smooth collaboration. They just want to make sure that we're doing it under the letter of the law, so the spirit is already there, and, you know, once they have legal clearance, they're happy to move forward.

**Nancy Alterio:** Yeah, and I think that's what the MOU addresses. It addresses what each state agency can and cannot share. So we're here to connect the dots and help us to conduct a multidisciplinary investigation, a joint investigation, when we can. And then, of course, we need to go through our legal channels to share protected information. And that's addressed in the MOA. We want to make sure that protective information is protected, that confidential information.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, confidentiality, super important. Do you review this on an annual basis or every other year?

**Dorian Long:** So typically, you know, when we're working on these, these things, you know, we connect with folks that are signing the document or folks that are liaisons related to the document through our Northeast One meeting, right? So the ability for us to do that is fairly easy. So, you know, we have situations where we're able to connect and do information sharing under the auspices of the MOU and we've had situations where clients have maybe presented across the border that are confused and maybe they're known to another APS program. So we really want to make sure that we have confirmed the appropriate contacts, and that's what I find is very helpful to share with our team members across the state, so that they know who they can contact if



we do have a situation or someone has crossed over. I think we need to look at doing something with Florida, something for some reason, people always end up here from everywhere, for Florida I think needs an agreement with the whole country, right? That's a popular place. But you know, in many circumstances, you know, we have folks that will come over the border from Massachusetts, etc., and move forward from there. But I think Nancy will speak more in detail about some of the circumstances.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** That's great. That's true. Because actually, when I was in Philadelphia, it seemed like Georgia, so it's not a neighboring state so much anymore. So that's interesting. So the information sharing you mentioned is in the memorandum of agreement based on each state statute, what they can and can't do, this just incredible. That's great. So I see there's also a clause indicating agreement that any changes in contact information or individual states must be communicated to the other states. And the annual reviews verifies that. You also meet on a monthly basis, or is it every other month?

**Dorian Long:** Bimonthly.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Every other month, okay. So this is a well-oiled machine here for communication, and you're on Zoom, so you don't have to, like, send mail or conference calls on a phone are, I remember back in the day when you had more than three people, everyone's talking over one another and everything else so it's great. So any success stories, I guess, Nancy, related to the APS clients moving across lines or being moved across state lines to Florida maybe?

**Nancy Alterio:** Yes, you know, talk about success, really the success begins with the collaboration and cooperation we have amongst our Northeast One states, and knowing who to contact when a case crosses state lines in Massachusetts or one or anywhere across the country. We have six close neighboring states, and some of our Massachusetts residents are served in other states, or the alleged abuser resides in another state. Also, if a Massachusetts adult resident with a disability is abused in another state, DPPC actually has jurisdiction to investigate that abuse given the victim's residency, given the victim is a Massachusetts resident, he's taken out of state, and he's abused, or she's abused, we may have jurisdiction to conduct an investigation. In all of these examples, all these cases, we need to know who to contact in the other state. We need cooperation from those other states. It makes us so much more efficient to our case when we know who to call and that person is responsive. The more effective we are in our cases, the more effective we are with the victims. In the past five years, Jennifer, DPPC had 345 cases with a person with a disability who is alleged to be abused was out of state.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Wow.

**Nancy Alterio:** DPPC, yes, three and then still more. DPPC also had 444 abuse reports, which we referred to other states' APS programs because of the person was a resident from that state, or the abuse happened in that state, and so we wanted to make sure that that APS agency knew that this person with a disability was being abused in their community. So it works, you know, both ways.



**Jennifer Spoeri:** Definitely.

**Nancy Alterio:** These combined cases, they include sexual assaults, elopement, physical assaults, kidnapping, neglect, financial abuse, and so much more. In a recent sexual assault case that occurred was actually in Rhode Island against a Massachusetts victim with a disability, but their sexual assault occurred in Rhode Island. Well, you know, we need to make sure that our victim, our resident, Massachusetts, has the opportunity to get whole, that the necessary protective services are put in place. So given we have authority to investigate that, in order for us to get involved, we need the cooperation from these other states. They don't have to, but it makes it a lot more effective when they do. And in this case, there was a lot of collaboration and a lot of support. In fact, our DPPC adult protective service investigator was able to sit in on the forensic interview, whereby ensuring that the necessary protective services were available to the victim. And there were so many agencies involved in that case, and the cooperation led really to its success, to making sure that the victim would receive the necessary trauma services.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** That is so nice to hear, but that she was or they were able to sit in on the interview so the victim wasn't interviewed over and over again and re-victimized too. You know, that's, that's incredible.

**Nancy Alterio:** You know, just having this MOA in place and knowing you can pick up the phone, you have a liaison in another state. Now that state, like in Rhode Island, their APS investigates abuses against older adults, 60 and older. They're not doing that 18 to 59 population, but we still have a liaison in Rhode Island, and they can say, oh, okay, you need to call this person from their Department of Developmental Services. You know, this is the law enforcement person you should be calling. So they help us, this liaison, although they don't have jurisdiction, they still were able to put us in touch with the appropriate and responsible people to help us do what we needed to do here in Massachusetts.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Yeah, and backing up to what you said when you first talked about the relationships, I remember the word domiciled. So it's like, if somebody owns a home in that state, there might still and that's where the lawyers really come in and are super helpful, because they can, they can explain, hey, the person has a home in Rhode Island, but the abuse happened over in this state, but they can still go to court in Rhode Island because of the property. You know, it gets complicated, but that's where attorneys are our friends.

**Nancy Alterio:** Yes.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** They still will take a lot of your time. Sorry to the attorney friends out there, but, but they're good people so well, thank you. Yeah, that's so the Florida thing, that's something we'll have to you, it's just knowing people down there, and that's where the internet is a wonderful thing. You can reach out to me, you know, I'll, I'll hook you up. So the lesson here is, get to know your neighbors. Start there. Get involved with your regions. And Dorian, Nancy, anything, any final parting words before we close this up? This has been great. Is it



all right? We'll have your information in the podcast introduction, so if anybody wants to reach out and have questions, we'll connect them, but.

**Nancy Alterio:** Absolutely, and we're grateful that you took on the subject. And there is one last thing I'd like to mention. I'd like to wish you a very happy birthday.

**Dorian Long:** Yes, happy birthday.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Thank you all. Thank you. Thank you. No singing. Nancy's getting over a cold.

**Dorian Long:** We don't want singing so.

**Jennifer Spoeri:** Well, thank you for taking the time today to share and highlight the great work coming out of the Northeast region, and the incredible work you've both done to support APS programs and the clients in the Northeast. So I'm sure people listening to this are going to run home and want to replicate this in their areas. So to the listeners, have a good rest of the day.

**Nancy Alterio:** Thank you, Jennifer.

**Dorian Long:** Thank you.

**Andrew Capehart:** Thanks so much for listening. To give us feedback on this podcast or reach out to us, please visit our website at [APSTARC.acl.gov](http://APSTARC.acl.gov). This podcast was created by the Adult Protective Services Technical Assistance Resource Center, administered by WRMA, Inc. under contract number 140D0424F1178, from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living, Administration on Aging. Special acknowledgement to the National Adult Protective Services Association, who contributed to this podcast. The views expressed in this podcast do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Administration for Community Living or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.