

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY  
ADULT PUBLIC GUARDIANSHIP REVIEW BOARD  
ANNUAL REPORT – FY09**

**Introduction**

The St. Mary's County Adult Public Guardianship Review Board (APGRB) was created through §14-401, *et seq.* of the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland to make recommendations to the Court regarding the continuation, modification or termination of public guardianship of disabled adults who are citizens of St. Mary's County. Guardianship is held either through the Department of Social Services or the Department of Aging. There are currently four adults with guardianship through the Department of Social Services and three adults with guardianship through the Department of Aging.

**Accomplishments and Activities**

In July of 2008 the APGRB submitted new By-Laws to the County Attorney for review and approval. Unfortunately one of the changes the APGRB wished to effectuate through the By-Laws could not occur as it was contradictory to the statute. During the last legislative session the APGRB President submitted a request for a statutory change in the make-up of the APGRB membership to the St. Mary's County Commissioners and the Southern Maryland Delegation. The St. Mary's County Delegation introduced legislation to alter the membership of the APGRB of St. Mary's County to require that one member be a physician and one be a psychiatrist or psychologist from the local health department. The legislation passed and was signed by Governor O'Malley on May 9, 2009, and will become law on October 1, 2009. The codification will be at §14-402 of the Family Law Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Once the law goes into effect the APGRB will re-submit their By-Laws to the County Attorney for review and approval.

The APGRB meets twice a year to review the guardianship cases and makes recommendations as to whether the guardianship should continue, should be modified or should be terminated. For all cases it reviewed in FY-09 it was recommended that guardianship should continue.

**Challenges**

The biggest challenge the APGRB has is to get and keep qualified members on the Board. The member with a physical disability and the attorney representative have been serving in some capacity since at least 1997, and since that time there has not been a physician, psychiatrist or otherwise, to serve on the Board on a regular basis.

## **Goals for FY-10**

It is the goal of the APGRB to have at least one paper review per year as allowed by statute rather than having two live reviews a year. This may help in having professional members willing to serve on the Board.

The APGRB intends to work with the County Commissioners to have the membership of the Board fully appointed, including the physician positions. Once the new legislation goes into effect on October 1, 2009, there will be a greater pool of persons available for appointment.

## **Membership**

The membership of the APGRB is set by statute, all of whom are appointed by the St. Mary's County Commissioners. Our current membership is as follows:

1. Claudette Jordon (Professional Representative of a Local Department - St. Mary's County Department of Social Services)
2. Physician
3. Physician (Psychiatrist from Local Health Department that employs Psychiatrists)
4. Lori Jennings-Harris (Representative of a Local Commission on Aging – Department of Aging)
5. Maureen Ault-McCarthy (Professional Representative of a Local Nonprofit Social Service Organization) - Vice Chair
6. Kathleen M. Werner (Lawyer) – Reporting Secretary
7. Joseph B. Bush (Lay Individual) - Chair
8. Andree Wells (Lay Individual)
9. Patricia Simone (Public Health Nurse – St. Mary's Health Department) – Recording Secretary
10. Julie Ohman (Professional in the Field of Disabilities – St. Mary's County Department of Human Services)
11. Thomas Stokel (Person with Physical Disability)