

Walsh, W. A., & Jones, L. M. (2016). A statewide study of the public's knowledge of child abuse reporting laws. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, 10(5), 561–579.

Legislation Alone May Not Be Enough to Encourage Public Reporting of Suspected Child Maltreatment

Kelli N. Hughes, JD

Nineteen U.S. states have enacted legislation requiring universal mandatory reporting of suspected child maltreatment. Through examining public knowledge of child abuse reporting laws in New Hampshire, a state that has adopted universal mandated reporting laws, this study, authored by Dr. Wendy A. Walsh and Dr. Lisa M. Jones and published in the *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, serves as an important reminder that the existence of universal reporting laws does not guarantee that the public is aware of or influenced by them. Implementation science can offer important lessons; robust legislation needs to be coupled with efforts to promote awareness and ensure that the public knows how to use the mechanisms put into place by the laws.

The authors completed 509 telephone interviews with randomly selected adults in New Hampshire seeking to understand the public's knowledge of child maltreatment reporting policies, the important factors that influence the decision to report, and the experience of the public with making a report.

Participants answered six true–false questions related to their knowledge of New Hampshire's universal reporting laws and Child Protective Services (CPS) policies. Responses revealed that a substantial portion of subjects (39%) did not know that they were required to report. More than half of those interviewed (61%) were not aware that they could be charged with a misdemeanor for failing to make a report, and a majority (71%) were unaware that the law does not require the child subject of a report be taken out of the home immediately. Most participants (86%) did know that a member of the public can make an anonymous report, and most (73%) also knew that the person who is reported is not allowed to know the identity of the reporter. Most participants (67%) knew that individuals cannot be sued for making a report when they are wrong about their suspicions.

The interviewees were then asked to discuss important consid-

erations for deciding whether to make a report. More than half (53%) of the participants said concerns that nothing would be done to help the situation would be a key consideration. Other factors, including the amount of time it takes to make a report, the level of discomfort felt for intervening in other families' lives, and that possibility that someone would find out that they made a report, were less important to their considerations.

Finally, interview participants were asked questions to ascertain their experience with making reports. Almost 1 in 5 (19%) of those interviewed had ever made a report. Females (25%) and those with postgraduate educations (35%) were significantly more likely to have made reports than males (13%) or those with less education. Older participants (43%) and males (63%) were more likely to call the police, while younger people (59%) and females (55%) were more likely to call CPS.

Dr. Walsh and Dr. Jones say their results indicate that while the public seems to understand some aspects of the reporting process, there are key aspects of reporting policy and procedures that are not well understood. Recommendations to improve reporting include increasing public awareness about universal reporting responsibilities and increasing education about the process of child abuse investigations. They further suggest that CPS agencies embark on education campaigns to change their public image and target public awareness campaigns by demographics.

The authors conclude that success in improving public reporting may be achieved through improving the public image of CPS agencies and countering misperceptions the public holds about how CPS agencies work with children and families.

About the Author

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News of the Organization

Janet F. Rosenzweig, PhD, MPA, Executive Director

2017—The Year of the Member

The vibrancy of APSAC comes from our members. As the premiere professional society dedicated to serving members of all professions involved with the many clinical, legal, and policy aspects of child maltreatment, APSAC attracts an exciting array of practitioners and researchers. The multi-disciplinary perspectives from physicians, attorneys, psychologists, social workers, researchers and others who comprise our membership, and our benefit to each other grow as our membership grows.

To encourage continued growth in our professional society, we are asking our current members to get creative in helping attract new members! Ask your friends and colleagues to join, and when they do, you can receive a discount on your membership. Send me a note at JFRosenzweig@apsac.org with your ideas about what we can do to make it easier for you to recruit new members.

Watch our Web site for special promotional offers or other incentives!

Welcome, Dr. Jim Campbell!



APSAC has taken an important step in our plans to increase services to members with the addition of Jim Campbell, PhD, to our staff as the training coordinator. Dr. Campbell is a longtime friend of APSAC and has been managing our popular and successful Colloquia since 2004. Jim recently retired

from a faculty appointment in the Division of Continuing Studies at University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he taught and coordinated training for human service workers and served in multiple administrative positions. Jim will be partnering in his work with Jane Campbell; Jim and Jane bring a wealth of knowledge having worked as consultants to various nonprofit organizations on training and conference programming and have planned numerous conferences on best prac-

tics for professionals serving children who have been abused or neglected.

With Jim on board, APSAC can plan exciting and timely training events to augment our popular work on forensic interviewing, and we are now available to help you plan and manage custom training in your community, state, or region! Contact Jim at JCampbell@apsac.org.

Join Us June 21–23, 2017, in Portland, Maine, for Our Advanced Training Summit

As APSAC plans for our 25th anniversary celebration Colloquia in New Orleans in June 2018, we are pleased to offer a special event for 2017. We have gathered the leading national experts on critical issues in child maltreatment research and practice and are proud to offer an Advanced Training Summit! Enjoy workshops and enroll in full and half-day institutes on the following:

- Abusive Head Trauma: Medical and Legal Issues
- Community, National, and Global Solutions for the Prevention of Child Maltreatment
- Identifying, Responding, Investigating, and Prosecuting Child Maltreatment
- Integrative Treatment of Complex Trauma
- Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy
- Psychological Maltreatment
- Religious Issues and Child Maltreatment
- Responding to Immigrant and Refugee Issues
- Trauma-Focused–Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Functional Family Therapy

The seaside town of Portland, Maine, is a lovely place to spend the longest day of summer! Check our Web site for updates or email APSAC@apsac.org to be included

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on our mailing list and to receive the early bird registration discount!

The APSAC Forensic Interviewing Clinics

The 2017 schedule for our highly regarded Forensic Interviewing Clinics is in process—meaning there is opportunity to bring our highly skilled training team and innovative curricula to your community.

Interviewing alleged victims of child abuse has received intense scrutiny in recent years and increasingly requires specialized training and expertise. APSAC Forensic Interviewing Clinics focus on the needs of all professionals responsible for conducting investigative interviews.

The comprehensive approach offered by APSAC provides a unique opportunity to participate in an intensive 40-hour training experience and have personal interaction with leading experts in the field of child forensic interviewing. Developed by top national experts, APSAC's curriculum emphasizes state-of-the-art principles of forensically sound interviewing with a balanced review of multiple models. Topics include the following:

- Overview of various interview models and introduction to forensic interview methods and techniques
- How investigative interviews differ from therapeutic interviews
- Child development considerations and linguistic issues
- Cultural considerations in interviewing
- Techniques for interviewing adolescents, reluctant children, and children with disabilities
- Being an effective witness

Special trainings can be tailored specifically for your community. For information, contact Dr. Campbell at JCampbell@apsac.org

NEW!!! Practice Guidelines for Psychological Maltreatment

APSAC is proud to announce the publication of the *APSAC Practice Guidelines for the Psychological Evaluation of Suspected Psychological Maltreatment in Children*

and *Adolescents*. These guidelines provide essential information about psychological maltreatment and its assessment, prevention, and intervention. Specific attention is given to factors that will help advance the work of child protection professionals responsible for gathering information, carrying out evaluations, and making determinations regarding suspected psychological maltreatment. The guidelines are also intended to advance policies and practices in child custody determinations as well as a wide range of child welfare situations and judicial processes concerning the treatment of children. Many thanks to the APSAC Task Force on Psychological Maltreatment, co-chaired by Marla Brassard, PhD and Stuart Hart, PhD and additional Guidelines contributors (in alphabetic order) Amy J. L. Baker, PhD, Marla Brassard, PhD, Zoe Chiel, and Stuart N. Hart, PhD.

The Guidelines will be available in the members-only section of the APSAC Web site; non-members can purchase a copy for \$10.00 by contacting APSAC@apsac.org. Interested in bringing a training on psychological maltreatment to your community? Contact Jcampbell@apsac.org

APSAC Launches a Policy Center

APSAC, in conjunction with the NY Foundling, is excited to announce the launch of a policy center. We believe that all professionals working with children and families involved in child maltreatment need access to quality information based on the best available data, which they can then translate into useable solutions to solve their most critical practice issues. The overall goal of the policy center is to translate the best available research findings into practical resources. Along with writing and distributing informational white papers or policy papers on critical issues, policy center activities will be targeted to help practitioners, advocates, and policy makers at all levels to apply the information to best advantage for their practice and the children and families they serve.

APSAC will be soliciting input from members as we determine policy issues to consider; we held a focus group at the San Diego International Conference on Child and Family Maltreatment and will be reaching out to members in other ways throughout the year.

Watch future editions of the *Advisor* and the [APSAC web site](#) for updates!

Washington Update

by *Ruth Friedman, PhD*

So far, 2017 in Washington, D.C., has been largely focused on Cabinet-level nominations, the Affordable Care Act (the ACA, or Obamacare), immigration bans, and a Supreme Court nomination. Action on President Trump's cabinet nominations has been relatively slow, in part because many have been contentious choices.

The new Secretary for HHS, Tom Price, was just confirmed on February 9. Political hires could not move forward at HHS until his confirmation was through the Senate, so there has not been much action within the agency yet, including the Administration for Children and Youth, which manages many of the federal programs related to child maltreatment. That is likely to begin to change now that the Secretary is in place.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA), Medicaid, and Reconciliation

Congressional Republicans and the President repeatedly stated that repeal of the ACA (i.e., Obamacare) would be a top priority. On January 13, Congress took the first step toward repeal by passing a Budget Resolution, which provided a procedural mechanism—called Reconciliation—for repealing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) with a simple majority vote as opposed to the normal 60-vote threshold in the Senate. On January 20, the President signed an Executive Order (which does not require Congressional consideration) that required Federal agencies to take steps to minimize the “economic burdens” of the ACA pending repeal. Analysts believe this would give HHS authority to stop enforcing the ACA's individual mandate, which is the requirement for all people to have health insurance or face a tax penalty.

Further progress on the ACA repeal appears to have slowed as Republican Leadership decided a replacement for the ACA should coincide with the repeal. Republicans have been unable to coalesce around a replacement plan. However, repealing ACA remains a priority for Republicans and negotiations are ongoing.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a progressive think tank in D.C., put together a short [summary](#) of some of the impacts possible replacement proposals would have.

Child and family advocates are also [extremely worried](#) about the future of Medicaid. First, many advocates believe the ACA repeal would eliminate the tens of billions of dollars sent to states to expand Medicaid under the ACA. Second, Republican Leaders in the House have proposed changing the financing structure of Medicaid. Advocates believe these changes would mean funding would not keep up with need. Few families who need insurance would have it, and the insurance they have would include less comprehensive coverage. Congress has yet to take any action on this, but advocates are concerned Congress will include these reforms in a reconciliation bill later this year.

Rumors about Republican plans for reconciliation have caused great alarm among child and family advocates. You can find an understandable primer on how the reconciliation process works [here](#). There have been early indications of Republicans being interested in addressing other safety net programs such as SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and SSI in a reconciliation bill. These concerns are due to proposals included in Speaker Ryan's [A Better Way](#) plan and some initial indication of a desire to move forward on some of the large safety-net program reforms. However, no actual proposals have begun to move forward so at this point, it is speculation.

Appropriations

The federal government is currently being funded under a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) that was passed in December 2016. It expires on April 28, 2017, which means Congress must pass a FY17 appropriations bill before that deadline to keep the government running through the end of the fiscal year. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will need to turn their attention to this in the near future.

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Possible New Funding Rules for House Laws Overdue for Reauthorization

The House Rules package for the 115th Congress, which passes at the beginning of every new Congress and governs many operational rules in the House (ranging from how to number bills to spending requirements and restrictions), passed on a party-line vote in January. Of particular note, this Congress's package instructed each Committee to report on laws that are overdue for reauthorization (e.g., CAPTA) and plans for those laws. Because some Republicans have recommended defunding any law overdue for reauthorization this new provision in the Rules package has raised concerns for some advocates. *If* the House Leadership chooses to move forward with this type of policy—and there is no indication yet that this is their plan—it is very unlikely it would be done quickly, as there are many large laws that are overdue for reauthorization. Advocates are following closely, but it is premature to worry.

HHS Release of Child Maltreatment 2015

On January 19, HHS's Administration for Children and Families released the [Child Maltreatment 2015](#) report. The report is from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), a voluntary national data collection and analysis program of state child abuse and neglect information. Among other things, the report shows an increase from FY2014 to 2016 in three key metrics: number of referrals to CPS agencies alleging maltreatment, number of referrals that CPS agencies accepted for investigation or alternative response, and number of children who were the subject of an investigation or alternative response. APSAC, in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse America, is preparing a companion report on using this data for advocacy and messaging.

Final Rule for the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

On December 14, 2016, the [final rule](#) for System (AF-CARS) was released by HHS. The final rule aligns closely with what was proposed in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in February 2015 and the Supplemental NPRM in April 2015 on ICWA data elements. The rule allows for more comprehensive data collection

and reporting to better understand the experiences of children in foster care, and it also allows for longitudinal data for the first time. Child advocates generally consider this to be a good revision. An overview of the changes, Q&A, talking points, and a summary can be found on [this](#) HHS Web page. We do not know if the new Administration will keep these resources available to the public so recommend you download them soon if they are of interest to you.

Children's Bureau Guidance on Implementing Plan of Safe Care Requirements

On January 17, the Children's Bureau issued ACF-ACYF-CB-PI-17-02, Program Instruction providing guidance to states on implementing provisions in CAPTA as amended by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA). You can find the Program Instruction and two appendices [here](#).

On January 18, the Children's Bureau issued Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-17-02 concerning high-quality legal representation for all parties in child welfare proceedings. The purpose of this IM is to emphasize the importance of high-quality legal representation in helping ensure a well-functioning child welfare system. It also highlights important research and identifies best practices and strategies to promote and sustain high-quality legal representation for all parents, children and youth, and child welfare agencies in all stages of child welfare proceedings. You can find it [here](#).

Final Rule on Runaway and Homeless Youth Program

On December 20, the Runaway and Homeless Youth [final rule](#) was released by HHS. The rule became effective January 19, 2017. The final rule reflects existing statutory requirements in the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act and changes made through the Reconnecting Homeless Youth Act of 2008. Specifically, the rule establishes program performance standards for Runaway and Homeless Youth grantees providing services to eligible youth and their families. Revisions have been made to the rule regarding additional requirements that apply to the Basic Center, Transitional Living, and Street Outreach Programs, including non-discrimination, background checks, outreach, and training. The

rule also updates existing regulations to reflect statutory changes made to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, and it updates procedures for soliciting and awarding grants.

Staying Informed

Interested in staying informed and up to date on a regular basis? One tool to help you stay informed about federal happenings impacting children and families is the Coalition for Human Needs, which produces a bi-monthly legislative newsletter as well as action alerts. You can find it [here](#).

About the Author

Dr. Ruth Friedman, PhD, is Executive Director of the National Child Abuse Coalition. She is an independent child and family policy consultant and national expert on early education, child welfare, and juvenile justice. She spent 12 years working for Democratic staff of the U.S. House Committee on Education and the Workforce, helping to spearhead early learning, child safety, and anti-poverty initiatives. Dr. Friedman has a PhD in clinical psychology and an MA in public policy. Prior to working for Congress, she was a researcher and therapist, focusing on resiliency in children and families living in high-poverty neighborhoods.

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Washington Update

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Conference Calendar

March

March 27–30, 2017

33rd International Symposium on Child Abuse
Huntsville, AL
256-533-5437
www.nationalcac.org

March 29–31, 2017

Child Welfare League of America
Advancing Excellence in Practice and Policy:
Highlighting Successful Strategies to Address the
Needs of Children, Youth and Families
Washington, DC
202-688-4200
Success2017@cwla.org
www.cwla.org/success2017/

April

April 2–5, 2017

Ray E. Helfer Society Annual Meeting
Denver, CO
630-359-4273
info@helpersociety.org
www.Helpersociety.org

April 6–7, 2017

Georgetown University
Moving From Research to Policy and
Practice to Improve the Lives of Youth
Washington, DC
202-687-5932
<https://mccourt.georgetown.edu/>

June

May 31–June 3, 2017

54th AFCC Annual Conference
Turning the Kaleidoscope of Family Conflict
Into a Prism of Harmony
Boston, MA
608-664-3750
afcc@afccnet.org

June 16–18, 2017

National Council of Juvenile and Family
Court Judge's 80th Annual Conference
Washington, DC
775-507-4777
contactus@ncjfcj.org
www.ncjfcj.org/80th-annual-conference

June 21–23, 2017

American Professional Society
on the Abuse of Children
Advanced Training Summit
Portland, ME
877-402-7722
apsac@apsac.org
www.apsacohio.org/2017-advanced-training-summit

July

July 11–14, 2017

The 2017 Montana Summer Institute
Big Sky, MT
www.montanainstitute.com

September

September 21–27, 2017

22nd International Summit and Training
on Violence, Abuse and Trauma
San Diego, CA
858-527-1860, x 4031
<http://www.ivatcenters.org>

October

October 1–4, 2017

15th ISPCAN European Regional Conference
on Child Abuse and Neglect
720-449-6010
ispcan@ispcan.org
<http://www.ispcan.org>

2018

March 9–13, 2018

National CASA/GAL Annual Conference
Boston, MA
800-628-3233
www.casaforchildren.org