

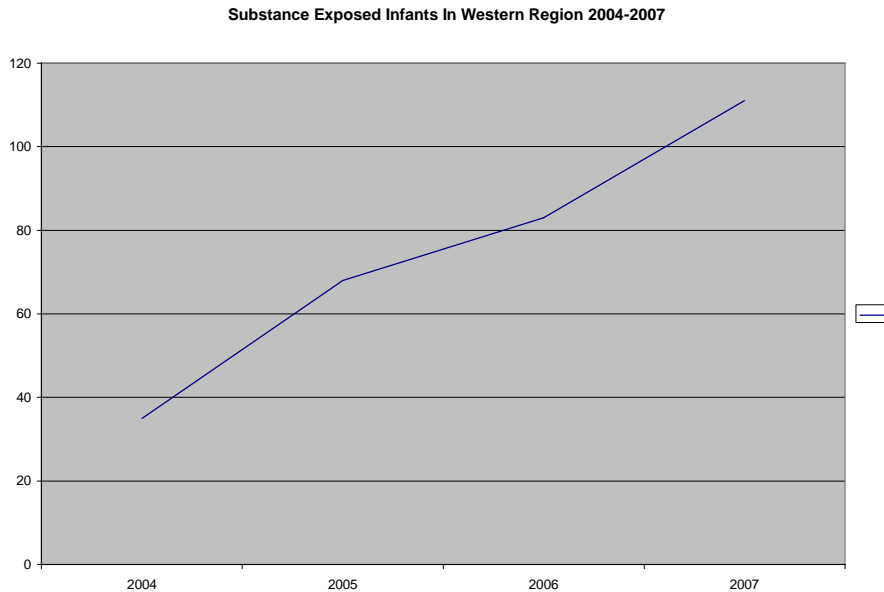
Good Morning,

My name is Tom Casteel and I am the Director of Washington County Dept. of Social Services. Although I've only been Director for about 5 months I've worked at the agency for almost 20 years as Assistant Director and as the Child Protective Services Supervisor.

Although Substance Abuse has an adverse effect on almost every program we administer from our efforts to promote self-sufficiency to programs for the frail elderly and disabled adults, this morning I would like to focus on the impact in the areas of Child Protective Services and Foster Care.

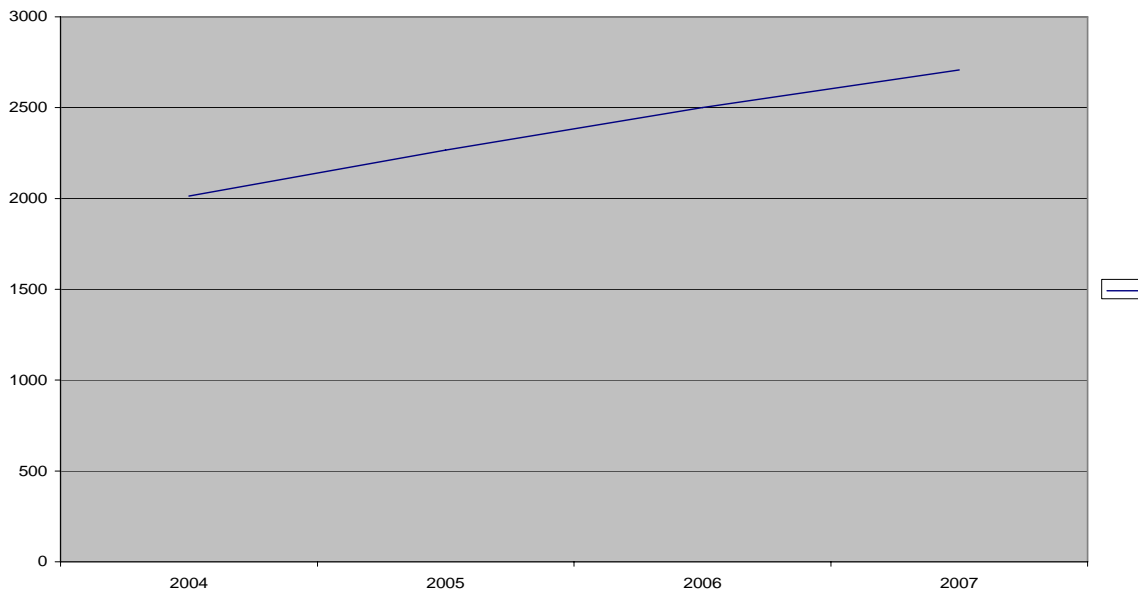
During the last 20 years our foster care caseload has averaged around 25 children. This past fiscal year we had 80 children in custody. Over half of those children came into care due to the substance abuse of their parents. This problem however, is not unique to Washington County. Although good data is hard to find, indications are that substance abuse has become the most common issue in Child Protective Services and Foster Care in the Western Region.

One measure of the problem is the increase in reports of substance exposed infants in our region. Although most practitioners in the field believe that these numbers are underreported, the available data shows a steady increase since 2004.



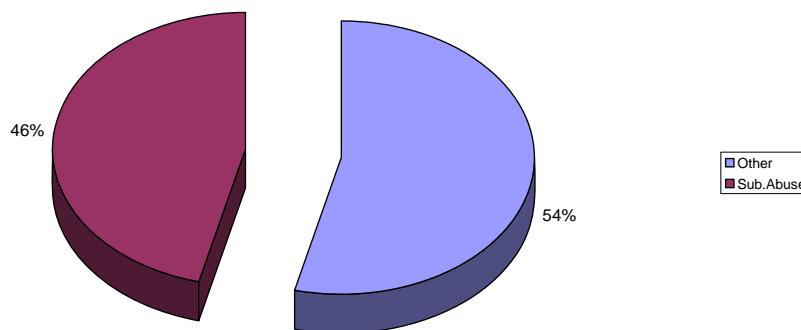
Another indicator is the increase in Child Protective Service Cases that involve substance abuse.

Substance Abuse Involved CPS Complaints In Western Region 2004-2007



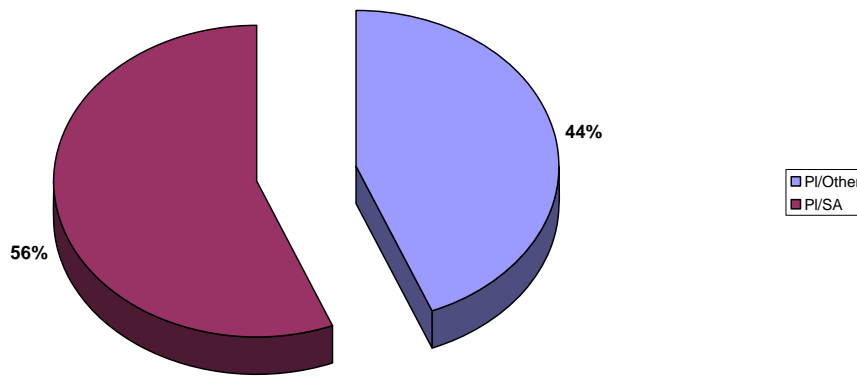
A survey just completed by the Foster Care and CPS Specialists in the Western Regional office reveal that in fiscal year 2007/2008 there were 1,413 children in Foster Care in the Western region. Substance abuse by their parents was the primary reasons 650 (46%) of those children were removed.

Kids Who Entered Foster Care In 2007 Due To Parents Substance Abuse In Western Region



In addition, 160 other children were removed in cases where substance abuse was identified as a secondary issue. Foster Care was prevented with 320 other children whose parents had substance abuse problems through kinship placements. Taken altogether there were **1,733** children placed out of their homes with **970 (56%)** due to substance abuse.

Children Placed Out-Of-Home (FosterCare & Relative Placement) Due To Substance Abuse

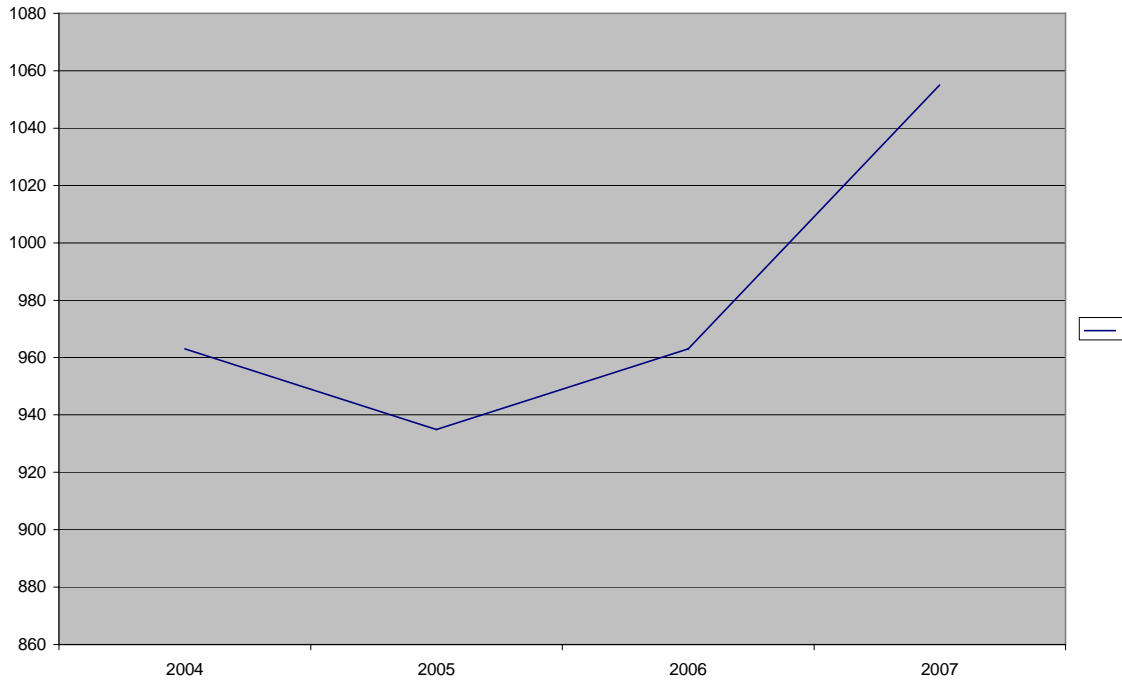


In some localities the percentages were much higher than the regional average. For example in Wise County 264 out of 283 children were placed in Foster Care due to substance abuse, in the City of Norton 29 out of 40, and in the City of Radford, 10 out of 12 children.

Because of the severe dysfunction of the substance abusing families many of the children who were removed required more specialized placements. It is estimated that approximately 50 kids were placed in residential facilities. Costs for residential care can range from \$1,200 to \$12,000 a month. 71 kids were placed in therapeutic foster care at an average of \$1,600 per month.

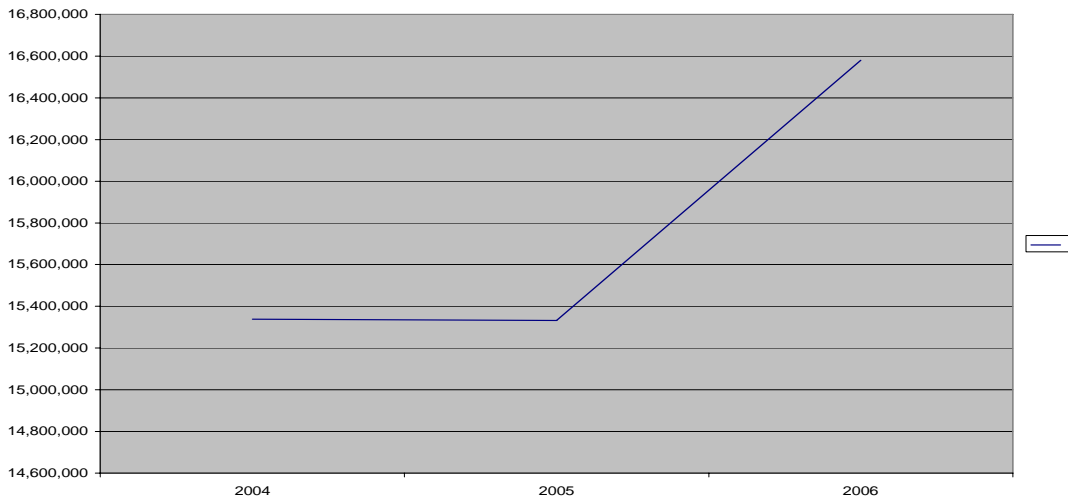
Although it is difficult to make a direct correlation with substance abuse, the overall number of children who have entered Foster Care in the Western Region has increased from 963 to over 1,400 since 2004:

Kids In Foster Care In Western Region 2004-2007



And the subsequent costs of the CSA programs in the region have also increased to close to 17 million dollars:

CSA Expenditures for Western Region 2004-2006



The long term costs of this problem can never be quantified. How can you measure human suffering and the destruction of families? How can you measure the impact on children when their parents are imprisoned for years and they are raised by strangers? How do you measure the impact of a fatal drug overdose of a parent on their children?

As you will hear later in these presentations there are some solutions to these complex and devastating problems. We need your help and resources to make these potential solutions a reality. Thank You.