

SOCIAL SERVICES TRENDS

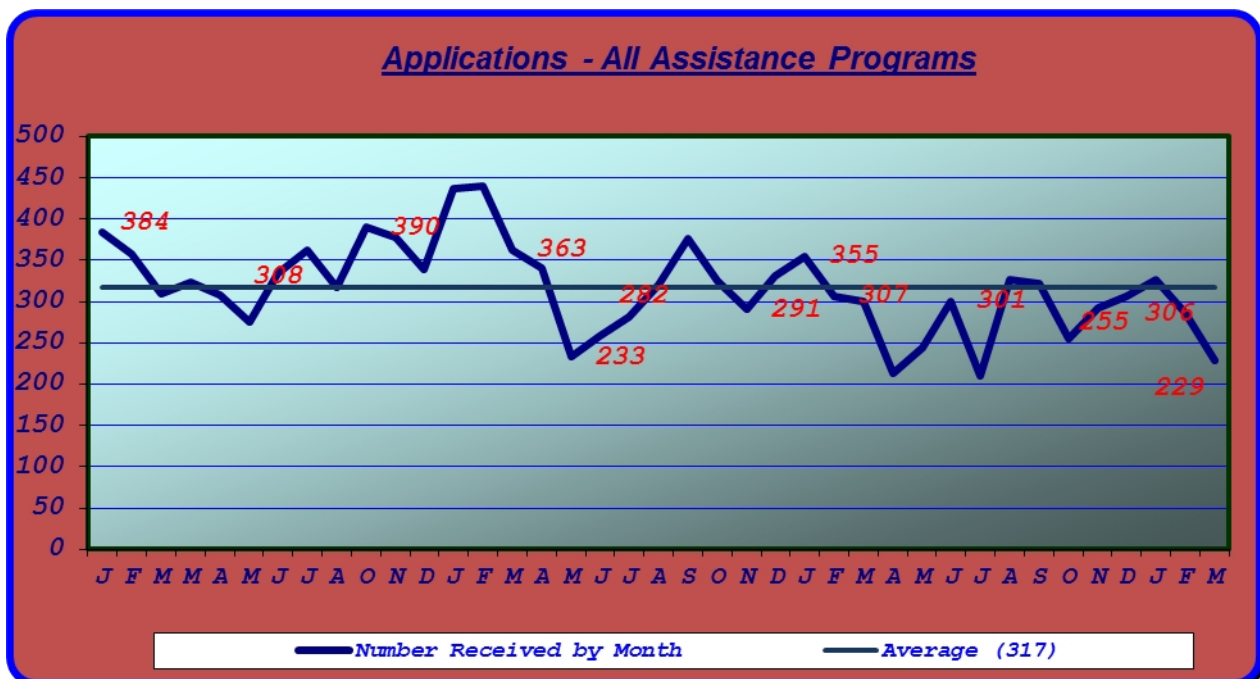
Quarter Ending: March 31, 2016

Social Services Trends is a quarterly report to the Plumas County Board of Supervisors and members of the public. This report provides case counts, application data, referrals for services and other workload information in the Department of Social Services. This edition of *Trends* includes case counts and workload data for the three-month quarter that ended March 31, 2016. The Department welcomes questions regarding the information contained in this report or about our programs and services. Additional information regarding our programs is available by calling 530-283-6350 or by accessing the Plumas County web site at www.countyofplumas.com.

I. WELFARE TO WORK & PUBLIC ASSISTANCE DIVISION

A. APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

Since February 2014, when the Department received 440 applications for economic assistance, the trend has been downward. While the largest share of applications continues to be for medical assistance, even there the trend is downward. In 2014 the average monthly application rate was 334 per month. Now it is 317 and dropping. We continue to see slow improvements in the local economy which lessen the need for economic assistance. And the Department believes we may have reached the saturation point for the Medi-Cal program meaning those who are eligible have applied for and been put on the program.



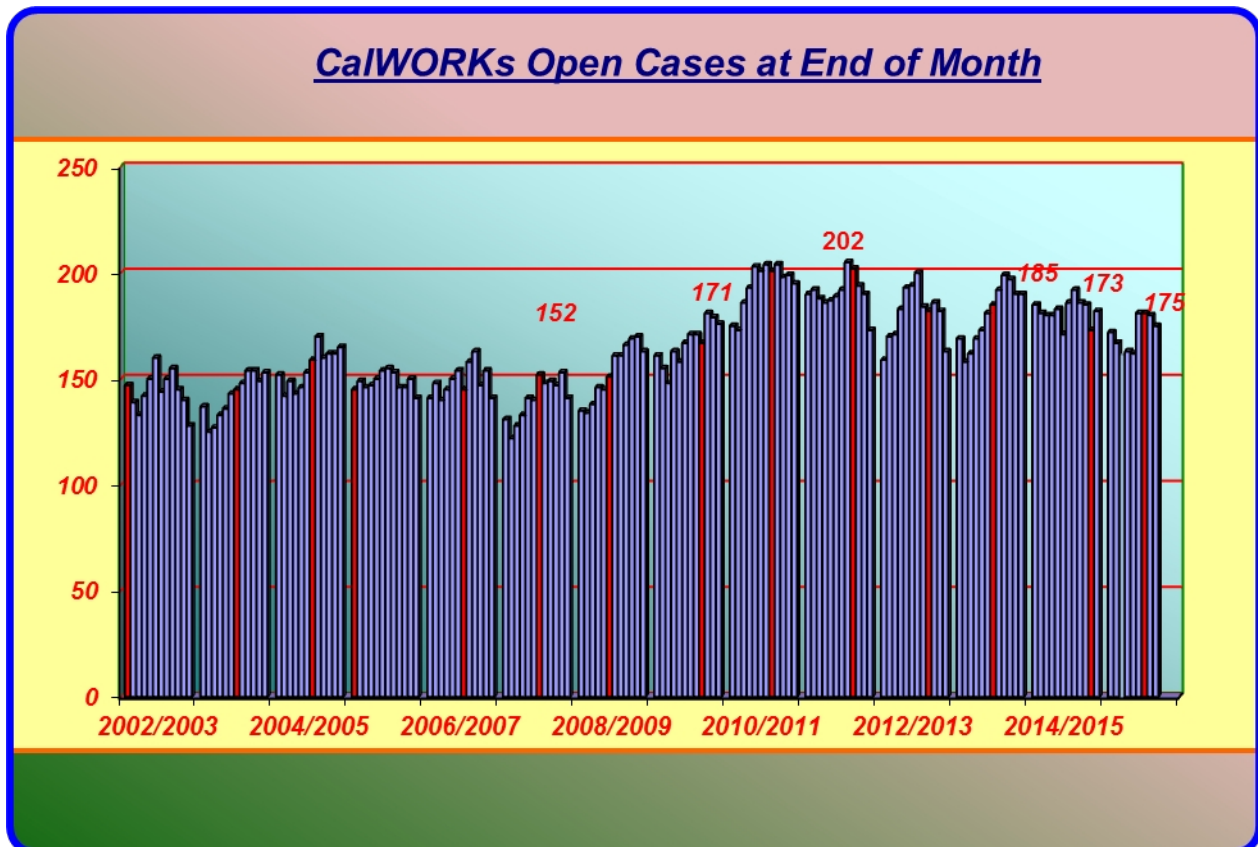
B. CONTINUING CASES

(1). Cash Assistance (AFDC/CalWORKs)

The Department continues to record a downward trend in the case count for the CalWORKs cash assistance program. Since the high count of 202 cases recorded in February of 2012, the case count has generally dropped with only brief periods of increase, most notably during the winter months. Our pre-recession case count was 150 cases per month. Evidence suggests that the case count is headed in that direction. Employment opportunities are likely to continue to grow although we expect growth to continue to be slow.

Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	180
2014/2015	182
2015/2016	171



(2). CalFresh (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) Assistance

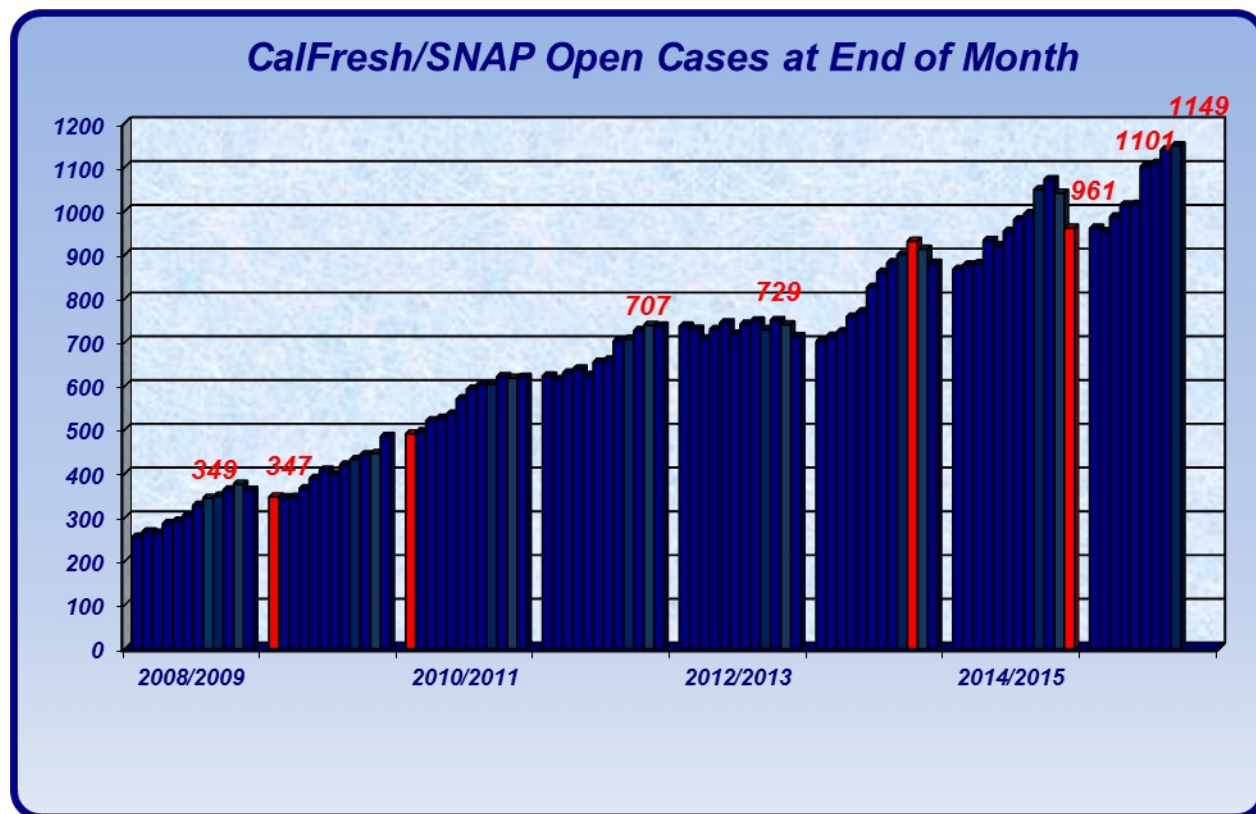
A. Case Count

While there have been improvements in the economy that would normally lead to an expectation of a reduction in case counts for the CalFresh program, changes in program eligibility have generated accompanying changes in the longer term case count. More than ever before, working individuals are qualifying for the CalFresh program. Under present regulations a person with income below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) can qualify for and receive CalFresh benefits.

The Department also continues to note increases in customers who are over 55 and disabled populations who used to “get by” without assistance even though many of them were eligible for it. Increases in food prices along with decreases in buying power have led many of those individuals to access the CalFresh program.

Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	822
2014/2015	961
2015/2016	1048

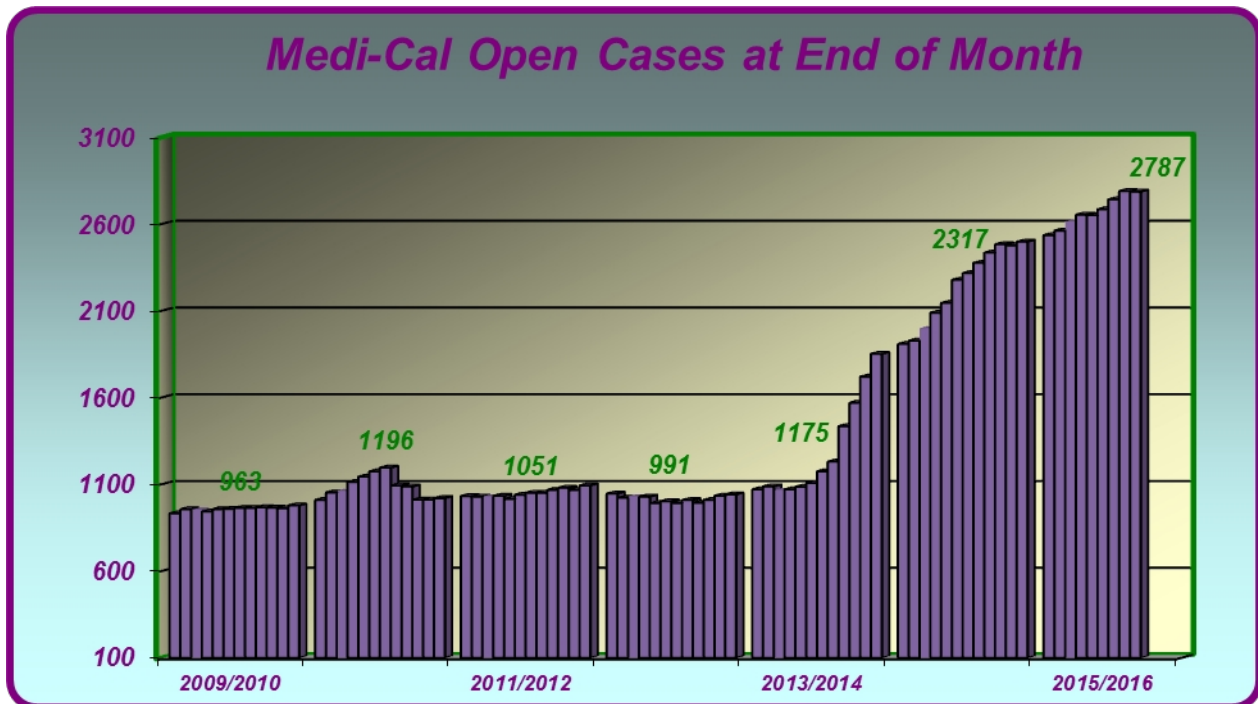


(3). Medi-Cal

The Department continues to believe that we are reaching a plateau in the growth for the Medi-Cal program. The Department notes that while growth continues, the trend upward has not been as steep as it was during the initial open enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (ACA). That would suggest that those individuals who did not have medical coverage prior to the ACA and who are eligible for coverage under the expanded Medi-Cal program have enrolled. Typically, those who are eligible for the expanded Medi-Cal program have earned income that is 138% of the federal poverty level or less. For a single individual that roughly translates into hourly earnings of \$7.85 per hour or less; or about \$1,354 per month. For a family of three, annual income at 138% of poverty is \$27,730 or less.

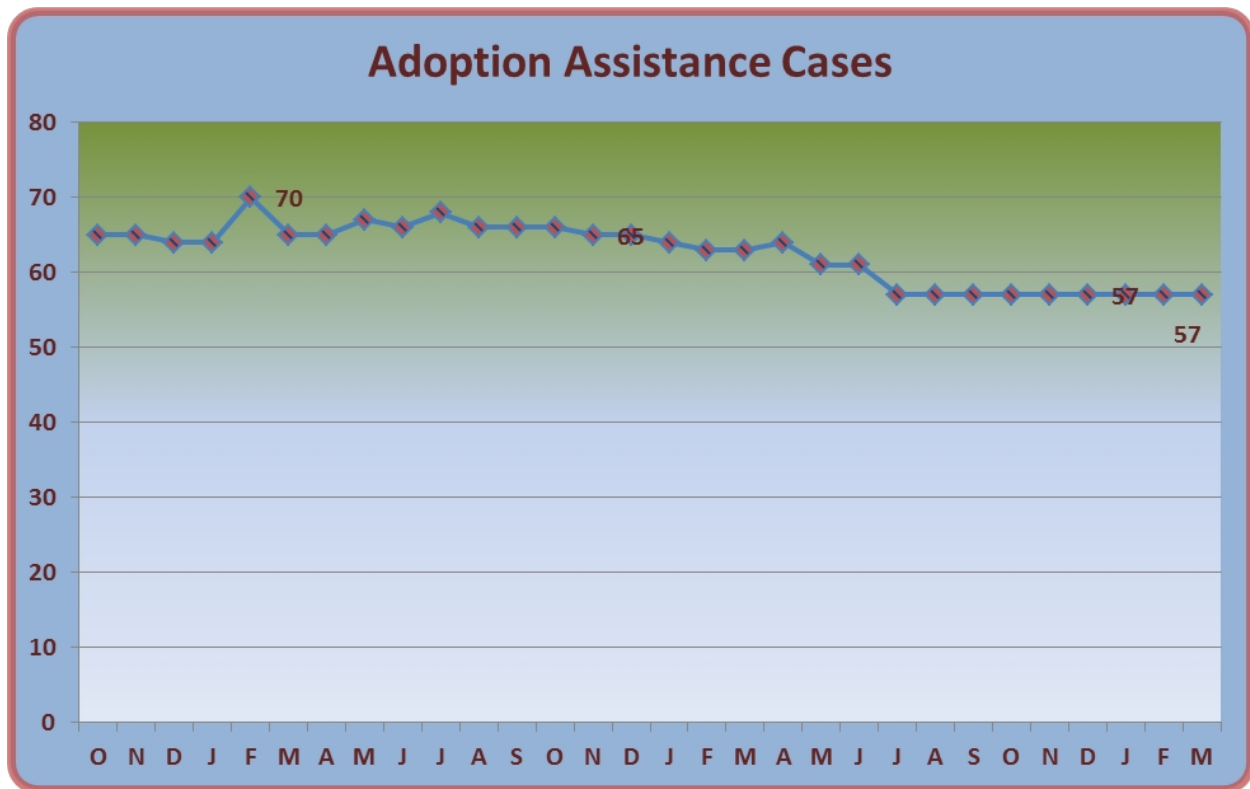
Average Monthly Caseload

2013/2014	1459
2014/2015	2245
2015/2016	2667



(4). Aid to Adoptions

In 2012 the Department of Social Services began operating the Adoptions programs. The services provided and benefits issued are mandated by Welfare and Institutions Code under Chapter 2.1 beginning at Section 16115. Services provided include home studies, training for adoptive parents and case management of adoptive placements. Adoptive families also qualify for cash assistance under the Aid to Adoptions program. The caseload for the Adoptions Program has dropped from a high count of 70 in January of 2013 to 57 children currently receiving assistance.

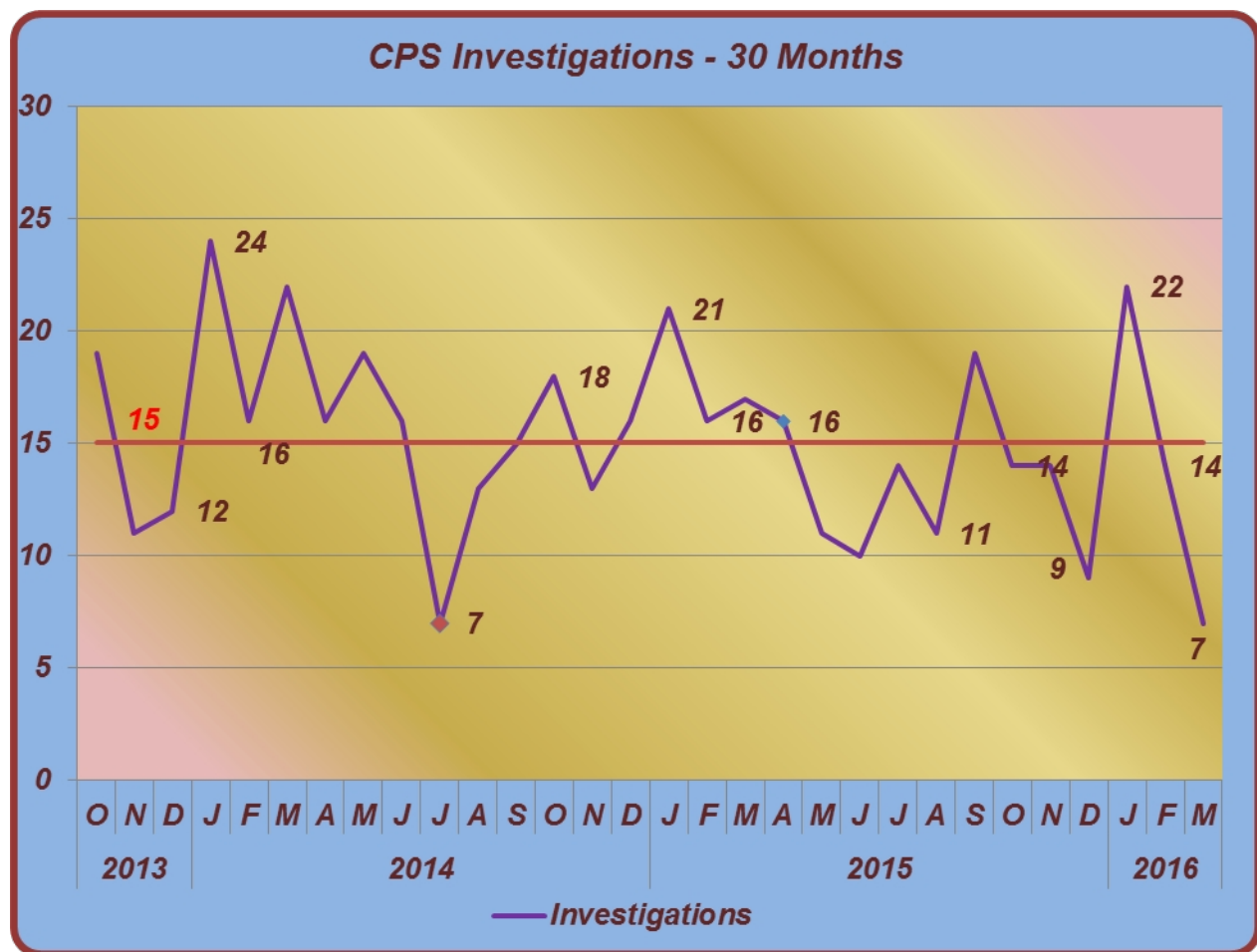


II. SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Child Welfare Services

The Emergency Response component of Child Protective Services has continued to average about 15 child abuse investigations per month. In January the Department investigated 22 cases of suspected child abuse. Higher counts of referrals for investigation during January closely match prior year counts (24 in January of 2014 and 21 in January of 2015). This is likely connected to children returning to school after a two week break where school personnel are more likely to notice signs of abuse or neglect.

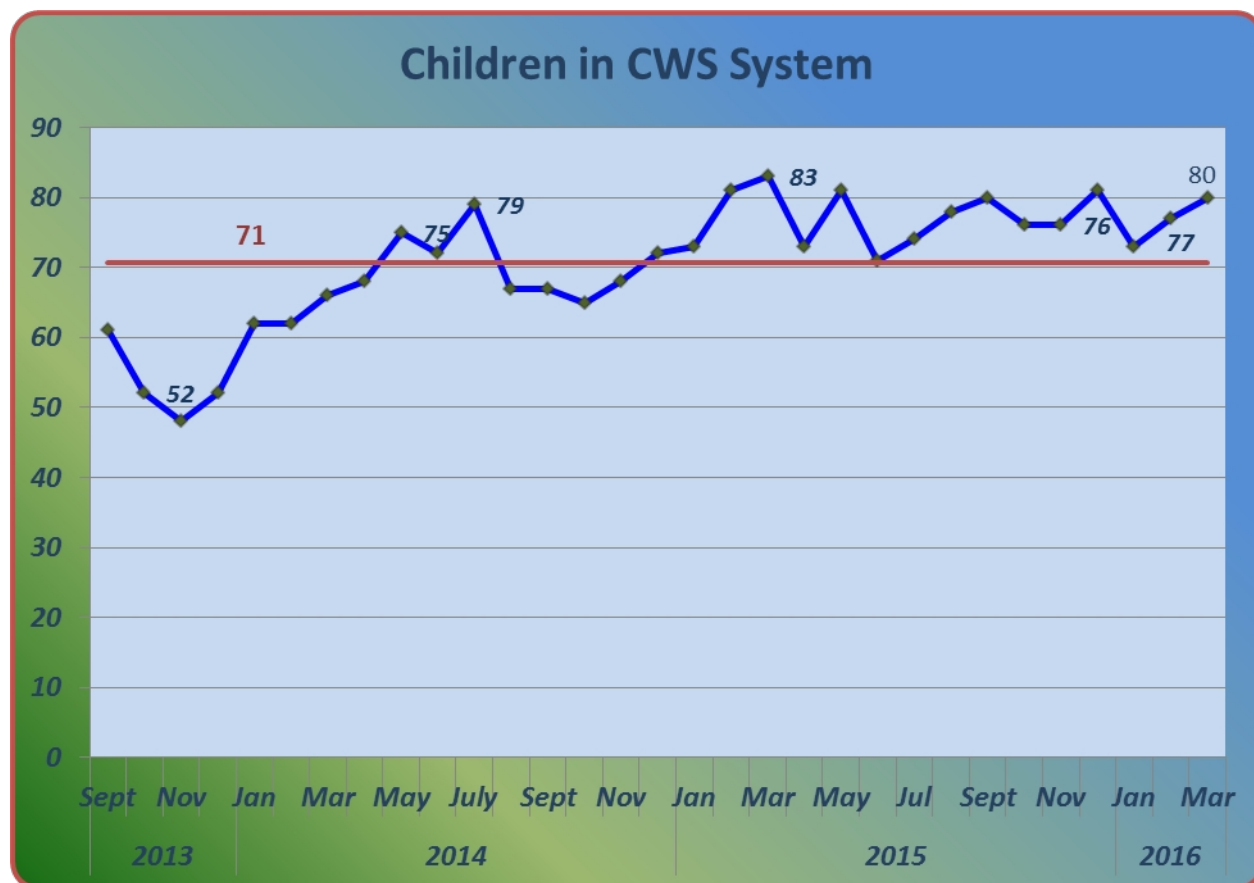
As the Department has noted previously, we have continued to experience significant numbers of cases where the precipitating factors leading to abuse and neglect are associated with substance abuse, in particular methamphetamine but also alcohol and other drugs. Substance abuse is the foremost reason that children are removed from unsafe environments.



B. Children in the Child Welfare Services System

As has been reported previously, under changes in the law associated with Assembly Bill 12 of 2012, some children will stay in the Child Welfare System longer so that they can complete their education or secure independent housing. Currently the Department has 6 children who are completing an educational plan or living independently. This circumstance has generated an increase in the case count which is not directly associated with new detentions of children.

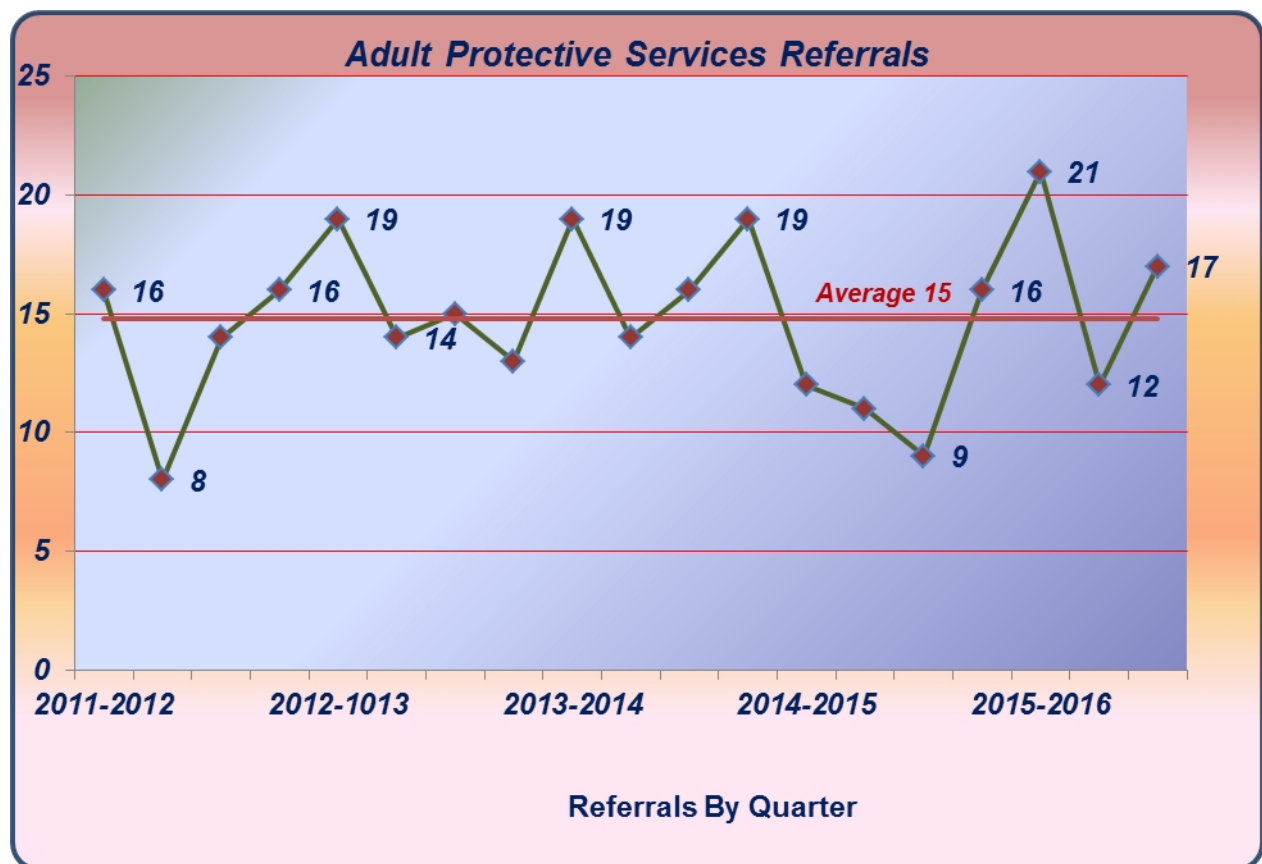
The Department has continued its trend toward placing foster children with relatives and with non-related extended family members. This has placed us in a position where we are less reliant on foster family agencies and foster homes for placement resources. While we expect that trend to continue, there remains a need for foster homes for children who come into our system. This is particularly evident when the Department detains children with special needs as there are fewer foster homes or group homes that provide the specialized care needed by these children.



C. Adult Protective Services

Generally the Department receives about 15 referrals per quarter for situations involving abuse or neglect of elderly and disabled people. During the three month period that concluded in March, 2016, the Department received 17 requests for investigation.

Referrals from financial institutions regarding suspicious circumstances connected with an elderly or disabled person's bank account have continued to account for many of the requests for investigation we receive. The Department also receives referrals that are for self-neglect. In some of these situations it is not always possible to intercede because the referent still has a right to self-determination.



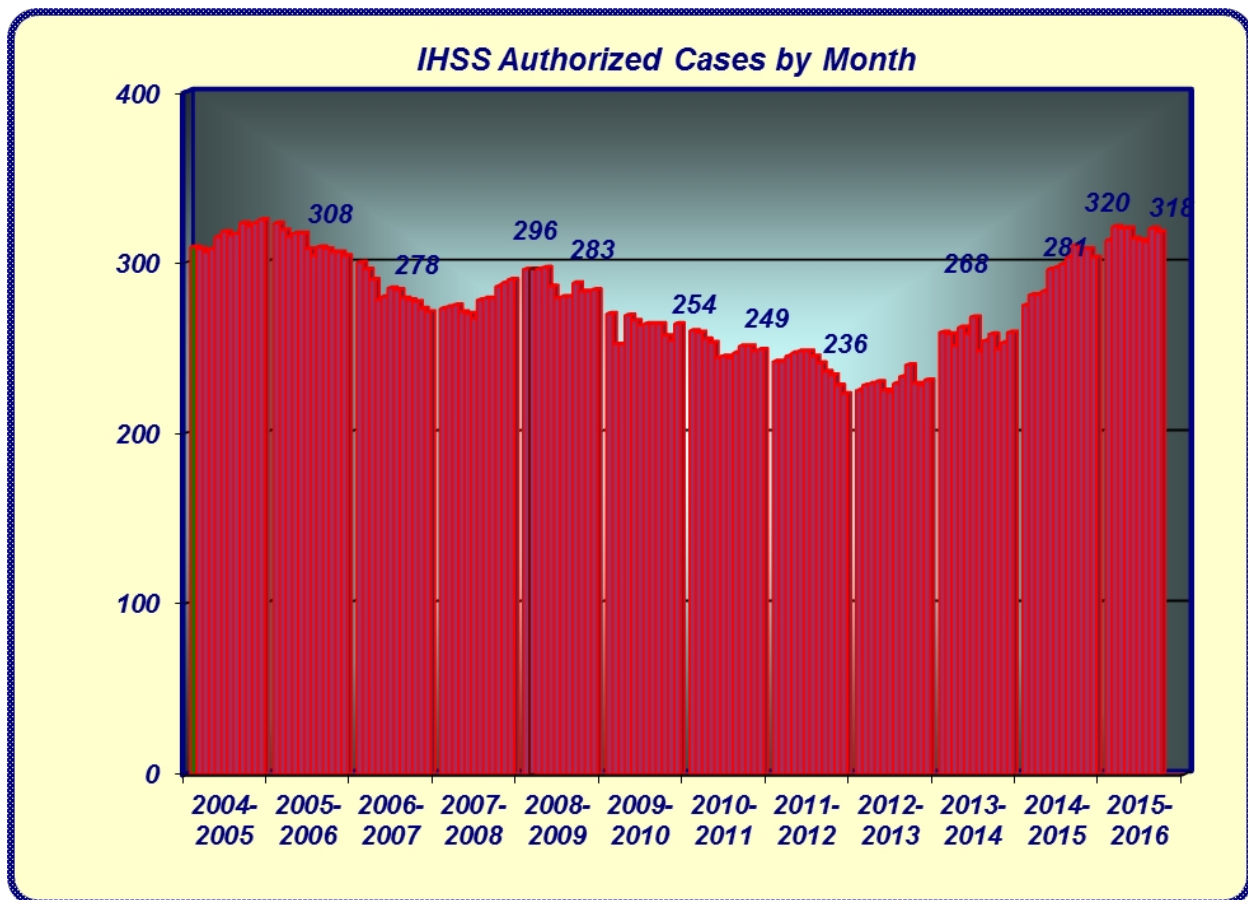
D. In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)

The IHSS program experienced a fairly steady period of case count decline from around 2009 to mid-2013. Those reductions in case count were linked to several state regulation and legislative changes that both changed eligibility requirements and reduced the number of authorized hours that could be approved under some circumstances.

With the advent of the Affordable Care Act, the Department determined that it would be likely that the case count might grow some due to people becoming eligible for Medi-Cal (federal Medicaid), as IHSS is funded by Medicaid dollars. That has turned out to be a correct prediction. We believe that we will continue to see some growth in this program due to the ACA.

Average Monthly Case Count

2013/2014	256
2014/2015	295
2015/2016	317



III. PUBLIC GUARDIAN

The Public Guardian currently provides guardianship and conservator services to a total of 11 LPS and Probate conservatees. The Public Guardian also serves as representative payee for 12 SSI recipients.