



# Garrett County Department of Social Services

2010 Annual Report

## From our Director



As the Director of the Garrett County Department of Social Services, it is with pride and enthusiasm that I present for your review our 2010 Annual Report.

During this past year my staff and I have been working vigorously to ensure that we provide only the highest quality of services to those whose lives are touched by our services and programs.

As the Governor, Legislature, and our Leadership in Baltimore search for solutions to Maryland's budgetary crisis and the ensuing challenges we, too, in Garrett County struggle. Although our struggles are linked they are different. We also struggle with shortages in funding, a significant increase in our case loads, and difficult challenges unique to rural Garrett County. However, the Agency has a rich history of coming together when the going is tough. GCDSS has the collective wisdom of its staff who are willing to meet challenges and initiate solutions.

The Agency's Advisory Board remains a positive and valued advocate providing insight into the unique needs of our community and customers. Members of the Agency's Advisory Board play a vital role, using their knowledge regarding Agency programs and services to provide a factual bridge of information between our Agency and the community.

As Director of GCDSS, I value the continued support of an outstanding and dedicated staff. During these trying economic times, I set great store in DHR's leadership, knowledge, and cooperation. I continue to value the many and varied contributions of Local Government and community partnerships. My staff and I look forward to continuing our collaboration on behalf of the customers we serve and the community in which we live.

Sincerely,  
*Rick DeWitt*, Director

### **Leadership Team**

**Rick DeWitt**  
Director

**Tamra Canfield**  
Assistant Director Services

**Tom Rosser**  
Assistant Director Family Investment  
Administration

**Phil Gillum**  
Assistant Director Child Support

**Alicia Streets**  
Assistant Director Administration

### **Advisory Board Members**

**Kim Durst, Chair**

**Barbara Baker, Vice-Chair**

**Heather Hanline, Secretary**

**Denny Glotfelty,**  
County Commissioner

**William Aspinall**

**Beverly Beard**

**Donna McClintock-Fost**

**Linda Green**

**Lt. Jeff Murphy**

**Suzanne Ryan**

**Sharon Teets**

## **Values**

**We value the effort, experience, knowledge, and professionalism of our employees to respond to the needs and deliver services to our customers. We value our employees' ability to inform our customers of the programs and services they are entitled and their obligation to actively participate in the process.**

**We value our partnerships with other community agencies that contribute to the delivery of service to our customers.**

**We value and respect our customers as individuals as we work together to improve the quality of their lives.**

## **Mission**

**We will aggressively pursue opportunities to assist Garrett County residents in economic need, increase prevention efforts, and protect vulnerable children and adults.**

## **Vision**

**We envision Garrett County residents living free from abuse and neglect while maximizing their potential for self-sufficiency.**

**Dedicated to: Prevention, Protection, and Self-sufficiency**

### **Customers of the Garrett County Department of Social Services have the following rights:**

- ◆ **To receive appropriate service (s).**
- ◆ **Services which are free from harm and mental, physical and sexual abuse/exploitation by staff.**
- ◆ **An impartial, timely grievance procedure, which affords you the ability to exercise your rights as described in the "Consumer Grievance Policy".**
- ◆ **To receive services in accordance with the applicable individualized Service Plans which conform to the rules and regulations which govern this Agency.**
- ◆ **To participate in the development and/or revision of their Service Plan.**
- ◆ **To receive in appropriate terms and language, explanation of the following:**
  - content and objectives of the Service Plan;**
  - nature and significance of any possible adverse effects caused by the Service Plan;**
  - name, title and role of personnel directly responsible for carrying out Service Plan;**
  - when appropriate, other available service providers.**
- ◆ **To privacy and confidentiality of services provided and records maintained.**
- ◆ **To access your Service Plan. If the Case Manager/Services worker responsible for your case determines access to your records would be harmful to you or other interested parties, that information will not be released. Release of information to other agencies can only be done with your written consent unless provided for by regulation.**
- ◆ **To an explanation, in appropriate terms and language usage, of any charges or fees that will be applied before receiving services from the Agency.**
- ◆ **Upon admission to services, to be informed in appropriate terms and language and through written policies by the prominent posting of the above rights.**

# Social Services Administration

## Child Protective Services

The Child Protective Services Unit continues to investigate cases and work on accreditation of our Child Advocacy Center (CAC) through the National Children's Alliance (NCA).

Our monthly CAC meetings are continuing with participation by all parties involved with our cases. Dr. Richard Porter, forensic nurse Heather Cooper, State's Attorney Lisa T. Welch, and law enforcement add valuable input to our case staffings. At these meetings we go over active cases and strategize for better outcomes.

The CAC multi-disciplinary team attended a national Conference in Huntsville, Alabama, site of the first CAC. There was much valuable information gained at the workshops. A special one-day workshop was attended by the group that dealt with accreditation of our CAC.

The presenter, Yvette Kubik who is a national expert on the topic of accreditation, visited our Agency in April and spent the day helping us focus on what we need to accomplish to become accredited.

The value of accreditation is in our ability to apply for grants and also in knowing that we're doing the best we can for children and families.

In September 2010 we will be hosting a workshop on Worker Safety presented by Jim Holler. Chief Jim Holler served as Chief of Police for 16 years in Gettysburg, PA and retired in 2007 to continue consulting in the area of child abuse.

He will present a four hour training at Garrett College for staff who visit customers in their homes. He will also present on the importance of bridging law enforcement and CPS together. This workshop was put together by one of our newest CPS workers, April Adams, MSW, with an assist by Margaret Carlson. Thanks to both of them for their hard work.

## In-Home Family Services

The Garrett County In-Home Family Service Program's purpose is to promote the safety and well-being of children and their families; to preserve family unity when children's safety can be supported; to maintain permanency for children; and to empower families to achieve or sustain independence and self-sufficiency. The program's goals include enhancing the parents' ability to create a safe, stable, and nurturing home environment that promotes healthy child development; preventing out-of-home placement of children when safety can be promoted to a sufficient proportion; and providing, referring, and coordinating services needed to achieve or maintain family safety, stability, independence, and unity.

The Garrett County Department of Social Services provides a continuum of service programs designed to achieve the purpose and goals of In-Home Family Services and to meet the needs of individual families.

Our family services unit lost a worker to retirement this year. Linda Heatherman, who had 30 years of State service. Linda and Theresa Kleppinger provided services in the Families Now program for 10 years. She will be missed by all, but Linda and her husband Joe will be playing golf and visiting grandchildren, much less stressful activities. Thank you Linda for your hard work and service to families in Garrett County.

The IHFP unit provides services to about 48 families per month and is accredited by the National Council on Accreditation, in New York.



# Social Services Administration

## **Foster Care & Adoption**

The Garrett County Foster Care/Adoption Program provides a temporary, out-of-home placement for children whose biological families are experiencing difficulties in parenting and/or supervision. Placement of children occurs within the context of licensed foster families, treatment foster homes, group homes, and residential treatment centers. The goal of the program is to provide high quality case management services and to secure a safe permanent living arrangement for each child as soon as possible.

**Regular Foster Care** - provides services to vulnerable children from birth to age 21. In FY 2010, the program provided services to 67 children. The length of stay for children in the program declined following new legislation and with due diligence from GCDSS staff to pursue permanent placement for cases of children in care for 15 months. Nearly all foster families are being “dually” licensed which means they will provide foster care as well as adopt. This has aided in the increasing number of finalized adoptions in the County.

**Semi-Independent Living** – provides services to youths in foster care who are 16 years or older and who will be emancipated upon reaching adulthood. The purpose of this program is to assist youth with life skills, educational advancement, career planning, employment, and money management skills.

These skills will prepare these foster children for success as adults. The goal of this program is to teach skills that are vital for self-sufficiency.

**Treatment Foster Care** – provides services to severely, emotionally-disturbed foster children while maintaining placement in a foster family setting and is completing its 12th full year in FY 2010. All program staff maintained national certification in non-violent crisis intervention techniques.

**Kinship Care** – provides services to extended family members meeting the needs of children accepted for care through the foster care program. Placement of foster children with an extended family member is preferred if removal from the biological family is imminent.

**Adoption** – licenses and matches adoptive homes with waiting children through the Maryland Adoption Resource Exchange Program (M.A.R.E.). The program finalized 5 adoptions for Garrett County in 2010. In addition, GCDSS has partnered with other counties to find suitable families for waiting children. GCDSS exceeded the goal of 4 finalized adoptions set by the State.



# Social Services Administration

## **Adult Protective Services**

Secretary Brenda Donald has reorganized some of the programs previously administered by Community Services Administration to now be under the auspicious of the Social Services Administration. In order to streamline those programs effectiveness and efficiency, the Adult Protective Services Program was one of the programs that was included in this transition.

Garrett County DSS continues to provide quality services to the adult population through voluntary, as well as mandated, programs. Vulnerable adults who have been mistreated, exploited, or have placed themselves at risk receive services under the Adult Protective Services Program (APS). All APS reports are screened by the Assistant Director and the lead APS worker prior to assignment for investigation. If allegations of abuse, self-neglect, or exploitation or neglect by others are proven valid, services are provided to prevent further harm or institutionalization. Of the 63 investigations completed in Fiscal Year 2010, 42 were self-neglect, 18 were neglect by others, and 2 were exploitation.

Educational workshops on APS and Domestic Violence were provided to professionals and members of the community in the previous year. Garrett County DSS purchased several videos that could be used by local agencies and the community for educational purposes. Content of the tapes included how to recognize the stages of Alzheimer's Disease and how to effectively deal with this progressive disease.

**Social Services to Adults (SSTA)** – is a voluntary program for disabled and elderly adults who may be in need of financial, medical, social, or psychological assistance. Customers may also be in need of, and/or eligible for, In-Home Aid Services (IHAS). Chore services are provided to help prevent institutionalization. The goal is to enable customers to remain in their community in the least restrictive manner so that their needs are met.

Customer safety is very important while services are being delivered. Customers may be referred to a step-up program, such as APS; or, they may be stepped-down from APS to SSTA/IHAS.

The APS and Social Services to Adults Programs have seen an increase in referrals due to community knowledge, increased need, and our customers are living longer. Although there was an increase in referrals, our average caseload size decreased slightly during the winter, due to a State-imposed moratorium. The moratorium lasted until May. Approximately 100 customers were served monthly by the Garrett Co. Adult/In Home Aid Program. The Department collaborates with the local Area Agency on Aging, the Health Department, and the local Core Service Agency to meet the needs of customers in the most efficient and effective manner.

**Project Home** – has one certified home serving four customers. The Agency's goal is to provide assistance to customers in the least restrictive setting with a homelike atmosphere. These individuals attend the local Adult Day Care Program and receive socialization skill enhancement.

All Adult, APS, Project Home, and Guardianship programs are accredited by the National Council on Accreditation in New York.



# Family Investment Administration

The Family Investment Program (FIP) provides Medical Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly Food Stamps, Child Care Subsidy, Temporary Cash Assistance to Families (TCA), Temporary Cash Assistance to Disabled Adults (TDAP), Long Term Care (Medical Assistance for Nursing Home residents), and Job Activity, Readiness, Placement, and Retention services. Family Investment is segmented into four interdependent units, two teams of Case Managers, Garrett WORKS (work opportunities), and Clerical Support.

Benefits issued by Family Investment are based both on technical and financial criteria as determined by Federal, State, and local policies. Garrett’s Family Investment Unit has exceeded the state and federal goals for error rates and application processing compliance in all Family Investment programs for seven years running. This reflects the hard work and dedication of FIP staff.

During the last state fiscal year, the Food Stamp caseload continued to increase, with a jump of 14% more cases this year over last. The Food Stamp caseload stands higher than our past record in 1994 (the end of the last recession). The Community Medical Assistance caseload increased by 14.4%. The state expanded the Medical Assistance Program to include adults in MCHP households effective 7/1/08. Since then 1717 individuals were added to the caseload. The Long Term Care (Nursing Home) Medical Assistance dropped slightly by 4.2%. The size of this caseload is driven by the number of nursing home beds in the County. TDAP has increased by 5.3% and provides cash assistance to disabled adults.

The TCA caseload increased by 10.7%. The dramatic increase in our core programs, Food Stamps (now known

as SNAP), MA ,and TCA, are an indicators of the depth of the recession and its effect on Garrett County citizens. We have seen a minor slowdown in applications over the last couple months, but the trend remains upward.

The Garrett WORKS Program remains a particularly challenging job in light of current circumstances. The strenuous work program requirements to qualify for TCA still discourage many applicants. Garrett WORKS helps customers find and retain employment. Jobs skills enhancement offers help for working customers to improve their skills and advance their careers. During 2010 Garrett WORKS exceeded our job placement goal of 25, making 39 placements as of 7/1/10. Additionally, Garrett County has reached a monthly Universal Engagement average of 100%, and a Work Participation Rate of 80%, which currently leads the state.

“Wheels to Work,” one of our most successful work enabling programs, allows working customers to purchase or fix their used vehicles with low-cost loans. During fiscal year 2010 to date, the program placed or repaired 10 vehicles. Wheels to Work is a partnership program between Garrett County Department of Social Services and Garrett County Community Action. Unfortunately, funding for this program has been drastically reduced for 2011. The program is currently operating with money from the loan receipt fund, but this will not last long.

Family Investment met or exceeded all performance measures set by DHR, as well as those set in our own strategic plan, for FY 2010. Wage at placement is currently \$9.32 per hour. This is because a few of the job placements were for high paying nursing and truck driving jobs. This wage rate is the exception; it has skewed our average.

<u>PERFORMANCE MEASURE</u>	<u>GOAL</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>
Application Processing Compliance		
Regular Applications	97%	100%
Expedited Food Stamps	100%	100%
Food Stamp Error Rate	Below 6.0%	0%
TCA Error Rate	Below 3%	0%
MA Error Rate	Below 3%	0%
TCA Job Placements	35	39 as of 7/1/10
Job Retention	70%	56%
Earnings Gain Rate	40%	219%
Work Participation Rate	50%	80%

# Family Investment Administration

The largest caseload handled by Family Investment continues to be the Medical Assistance caseload. 21.3% of Garrett County's population participated in some kind of Medical Assistance program during 2010. This is the third largest percentage of the general population that relies on Medical Assistance of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland, behind only Baltimore City and several shore counties.

The Child Care Subsidy Program was threatened with the imposition of a wait list for customers early in 2010, but the imposition of the wait list was lifted at the last minute. The push by MSDE remains toward formal daycare, which has an education component. Unfortunately, there are too few providers of this type in Garrett County. As of June 2010 the POC caseload stood at 103 children.

Family Investment continues to provide services to needy customers through Emergency Assistance for utilities and housing and Burial Assistance. Over \$56,676 in grant monies were awarded this year. The grant limit for Emergency Assistance for heat is \$500 a year.

## FY 10 Statistics

Temporary Cash Assistance to families	Recipients	185
Temporary Cash Assistance to disabled adults	Recipients/Cases	59
Public Assistance to Adults	Recipients/Cases	8
Purchase of Care (POC)	Children	103
Food Stamps	Recipients	3936
Medical Assistance-Community	Recipients	4369
Medical Assistance-Long Term Care (Nursing Homes)	Recipients	225

# Local General Administration

The Local General Administration (LGA) is responsible for numerous support functions including the Finance Office and Administration. The Finance Office is responsible for all financial operations including accounting and budgeting. Administration is responsible for personnel, procurement, inventory, fleet, network, and facilities management.

## LGA Unit Outcomes for Fiscal Year 2010

### Outcomes

Effectively used resources to meet agency needs without deficit spending.

Limited resources were used to meet core mission.

The fiscal year was closed with no deficits.

Partnered with Programs to institute and enhance strategic planning initiatives.

Decreased network downtime and increased productivity.

Streamlined fiscal processes to gain efficiencies in operations.

Successfully obtained the Children's Justice Act Committee (CJAC) Grant.

Maximized personnel resources to better implement best practices and streamline customer service.



## Child Support Enforcement

The Child Support Enforcement Unit of GCDSS plays an important role in carrying out the Agency's goal of assisting customers in becoming self-sufficient.

Since 1999 the Bureau of Support Enforcement (BOSE) has been speaking to 9th graders at the local high schools about their growing responsibilities, budgets, and reality of paying child support. This message has been presented to approximately 5,600 students since the beginning of the program. Student feedback indicates that this program has and continues to be enthusiastically received.

### Child Support Services Include

- ◆ Locating non-custodial parents
- ◆ Collection and distribution of payments—The GCDSS Child Support Unit collected and distributed \$2,300,000 in FY 2010.

- ◆ Obtaining a court order for child support and medical insurance
- ◆ Enforcement of court orders—The GCDSS Child Support Unit has met or exceeded the State Stat goal for establishing court orders and paternity
- ◆ Review and adjustment of court orders

Paternity Establish Services are available through genetic testing and an In-Hospital Paternity program.

There are a number of administrative tools for enforcing court orders that include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Drivers License Suspension
- ◆ New Hire Reporting
- ◆ Automatic Earnings Withholding
- ◆ Interception of Federal and State Tax Refunds

## Service Expansion at the Grantsville Office



The agency has taken advantage of the opportunity provided by the Family Investment Aide Program and is using it to expand service delivery to customers in the Grantsville area. The Family Investment Aide Program is a statewide initiative offering state employment to qualified customers across the state. Garrett was allocated one

position, and we were pleased to welcome Melissa Malatesta to the Agency on 2/17/10. The addition of this extra position enabled us to begin looking at expanding services in our Grantsville office on a permanent basis. An Agency team made up of Alicia Streets, Brenda Thomas, Darla Panther, Linda Ashby, Elaine Meyers, Jenny McNally, Larry Bruch, Melissa Malatesta, Nancy Humberson, Phil Gillum, Rick DeWitt, Scott Voorhees, and Tom Rosser began meeting in April to decide what we wanted to do and plan how to accomplish our goal.

Effective 7/1/10 Nancy Humberson, Jenny McNally, Elaine Meyers, and Melissa Malatesta will be located in Grantsville full-time. Tanya Kessell, Lead Worker for Child Support Enforcement, will be in Grantsville on Tuesdays. Sarah Trottier and Linda Bolding Colaw will be there on Fridays offering customers work programs and addiction services. Linda Ashby and Darla Panther will provide on-site supervision one day a week on alternating weeks. Monica Barnett and Mike Downton are already stationed at the Grantsville office full-time.

Family Investment services offered will include Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly called Food Stamps walk-in interview service Monday through Thursday from 8:00 to 10:30 each morning. As always, customers will be able to turn in an application anytime the office is open (8:00 to 4:00 for Grantsville). All other FIP programs will be by appointment (as we do in Oakland). Long-Term Care and Child Care Subsidy services will remain in Oakland.

Customers with zip codes 21536 Grantsville, 21532 Frostburg, 21539 Lonaconing, 21522 Bittinger, and 21521 Barton will be served by the staff at the Grantsville office. There are 636 assistance units in these zip codes; there will be 4,130 assistance units in Oakland after the change. Caseload redistribution was completed in late June. Letters will be sent to all customers who are being reassigned to Grantsville. Beginning 7/1, when a customer calls the Agency, one of the first questions we ask is, "What is your zip code?" A new Verizon contract is being arranged, and a new telephone system with enhanced features should be in place by this Fall.

**The leadership and staff of GCDSS are committed to providing only the highest quality services to our customers and community.**



**GCDSS Staff hosted fun activities at the 2010 Garrett County Kids First Fun Fair.**



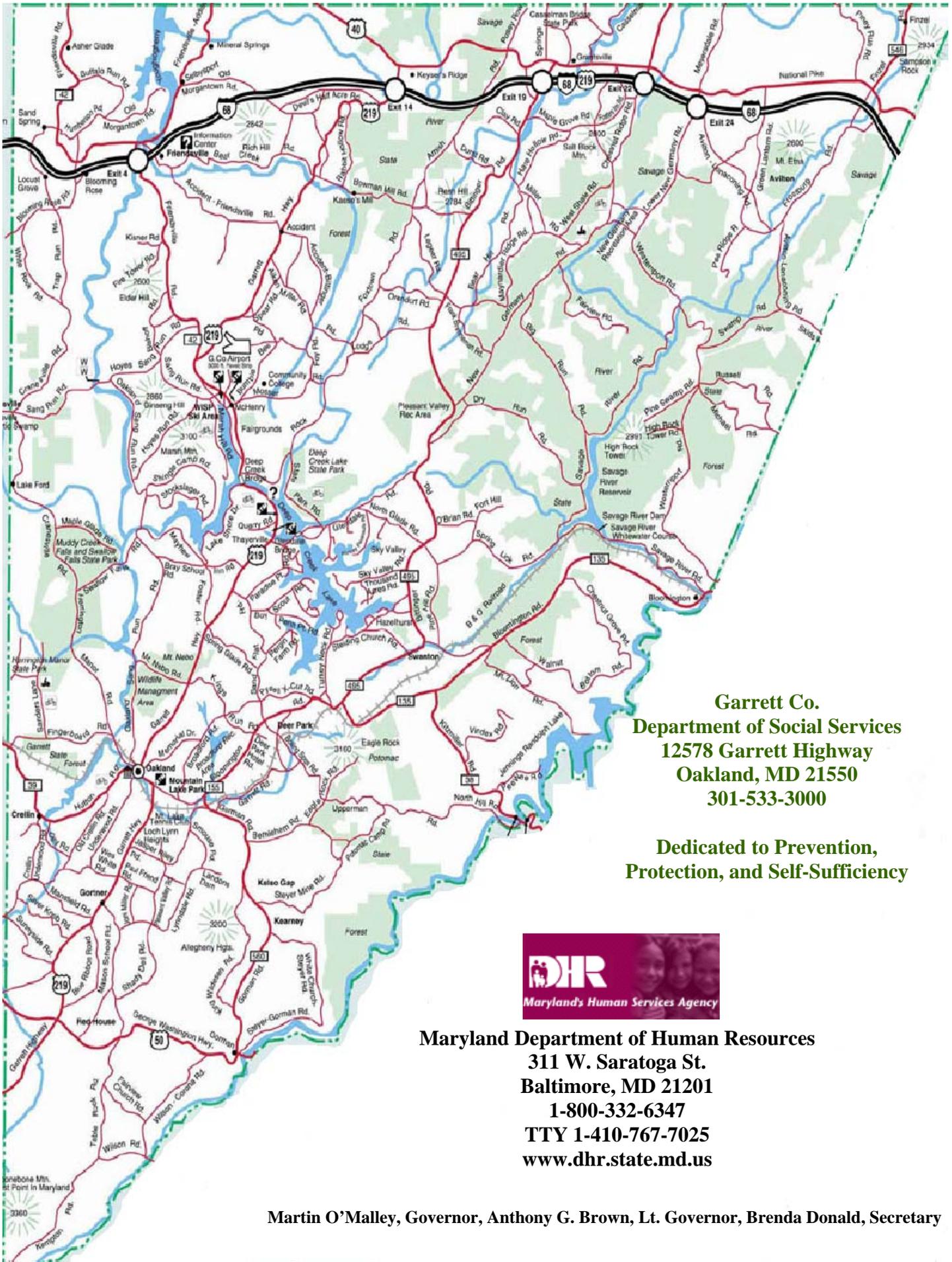
**Garrett County Health Fair  
Social Workers April Adams, Dawna Day, Shannon Haley, and Director Rick DeWitt (not pictured) represented GCDSS and shared the Agency's commitment to provide information regarding eligibility requirements for our programs and services.**



**GCDSS Director Rick DeWitt receives a plaque of recognition for the Accreditation of DHR and all locals. Maryland is one of only seven States to be fully accredited. Rick also received a certificate of recognition for his individual efforts in assisting DHR with the Accreditation process. Presenting the recognition was Deputy Secretary Stacy Rodgers and Richard Klarberg, President and CEO of the Council on Accreditation.**



**Jessica Savage was selected as Garrett Co. DSS's Social Worker of the year for 2010. Jessica was our nominee for "Social Worker of the Year" based on her diligent efforts on behalf of the customers she serves.**



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**Dedicated to Prevention,**  
**Protection, and Self-Sufficiency**



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**Martin O'Malley, Governor, Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor, Brenda Donald, Secretary**