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## Rehab for 'negligent' elder care

By CHUCK BENNETT

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Major reforms are coming to the city's embattled Human Resources Agency as it looks to settle a longstanding federal lawsuit alleging it has neglected the senior citizens in its care.

At the heart of the 3-year-old case is the agency's Adult Protective Services unit, which helps about 6,000 senior citizens and mentally deficient citizens stay in their own homes by providing assistance with managing their finances and by setting up part-time care.

But the agency, with a \$46 million yearly budget and 452 employees, routinely loses its wards' money, forgets to arrange for nurses and other services, and even forgets to check in on them, advocates for the elderly alleged.

Their neglect caused some seniors to blow their meager Social Security and other benefits on sweepstakes or even have their utilities turned off because the social workers failed to pay the bills, advocates said.

"The caseworkers are overworked . . . and the criteria for hiring them is too minimal," said Jane Greengold Stevens, an attorney with the New York Legal Assistance Group, which filed the class-action case in Manhattan federal court.

A settlement which could completely revamp how APS cares for its wards is expected by summer, Stevens said.

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