

Elder Abuse and Neglect

Presented by the Lehigh County District Attorney's
Elder Abuse Task Force

Elder Abuse Task Force Facts

- Task Force was created in 2007 by District Attorney Jim Martin
- Meet 4 times a year, regular contact throughout - next meeting is May 12, 2021 via Zoom
- Investigate reports, prosecute cases in which dependent or elder adult is victim
 - 60 or older
 - Due to physical or cognitive impairment, needs assistance to meet needs for food, shelter, clothing, personal or health care
- Education
 - Recognize signs of elder abuse and neglect
 - Encourage residents to reports cases

Elder Abuse Task Force Members

- DA's office
- Local Law Enforcement
- Aging and Adult Services
- Citizens
- Coroner's Office
- Lehigh County Human Resources
- Orphan's Court
- Major Health Networks
- Social Service Agencies
- Financial Institutions
- Temple University Institute on Protective Services
- Law Department
- US Dept. of Justice
- Continuing Care Communities

Elder Abuse Task Force Events

- GOAL
 - Prevent abuse and provide protection to vulnerable
 - Create awareness and provide resources
 - Attend Senior Events
 - PowerPoints Presentations
 - Work collaboratively

Elder Abuse Task Force Protocols

- In 2015 and 2016, the EATF developed a Resource Guide and Protocols

Guide to share contact information and resources

Checklist for law enforcement

Ensures uniformity in responding and investigating cases

Lehigh Valley Gatekeepers

- Partnership
- Collective Community Approach to connect at-risk older adults to services
- Non-traditional referral sources who come into contact with older adults through work or daily lives
- Trained to recognize warning signs and red flags
- Trained to understand protocol for getting help and reporting anonymously
- Goal is to keep them living safely and independently

Types of Abuse

One in Ten Americans over the age of 60 living at home have experienced elder abuse

CDC Report 2017

- Physical
- Psychological
- Verbal
- Financial
- Emotional
- Sexual
- Neglect
- Abandonment

ALARMING FACTS

- A study done by the World Health Organization shows this is a global problem
- In 2017, 15.7% of people over the age of 60 were subjected to some form of abuse
- Only 1 in 24 cases are reported
- Worldwide, 64.2% of staff in elder care institutions perpetrated some form of abuse
- Victims of abuse are twice more likely to die than those who are not
- AAA reported over 250% increase in reports of need in past 5 years

Lack of Reporting

- Shame for inability to care for oneself
- Disbelief that child, family member can do this
- Fear of nursing home
- Feelings of guilt/burden, helplessness
- Loyalty to abuser
- Intellectually impaired/mentally ill

Charges

- Assault
- Theft
- Sexual Crimes

TIPS

- Mom and Pop scams
- Telephone scams
 - Try to AVOID saying “yes”
 - FBI or IRS NEVER call – they send letters
 - Do NOT give personal or financial information over the phone or internet
 - Name
 - Address
 - Age
 - Social security number
- Card Cracking

TIPS

- Be *AWARE* of money – check statements
- Review protection options with Bank, Insurance Company, Credit Card Company
- Change pin #'s regularly
- Require a check for identification

CONTACTS

- Ramma Mineo
ADA, Lehigh County District Attorney's Office
 - (610) 782-3100
- Lehigh County Aging and Adult Services
Government Center
 - (610) 782-3200, M-F, 8:30-4:30
 - (610) 782-3034, M-S, holidays, after 4:30
- Trusted friend or family member
- Crime Victims Council of Lehigh Valley
 - (610) 437-6611, 24/7
- Local Police Department
- Office of Attorney General
 - Elder Abuse Unit: (866) 623-2137
 - Consumer Protection: (800) 441-2555