

Adult Protective Services Fact Sheet

National Research Facts

⊙One elderly person is victimized every 2.7 minutes. (National Center on Elder Abuse 2006)

⊙Data on elder abuse in domestic settings suggest that only 1 in 14 incidents, excluding incidents of self-neglect, come to the attention of authorities.

[Pillemer, Karl, and David Finkelhor. 1988. "The Prevalence of Elder Abuse: A Random Sample Survey."]

⊙Older adults who are abused are 3 times more likely to die within 10 years than those who are not.

North Carolina Facts

⊙According to the North Carolina Adult Protective Services Register, 81% of the reports were on adults with disabilities living in their own homes, while about 19% of the reports were on individuals living in long term care facilities.

⊙NC's Adult Protective Services (APS) law provides protection to all adults age 18 and older who have a disability and who are abused, neglected or exploited.

⊙Older adults comprise the majority of those receiving APS in North Carolina. 70% were 60 years of age or older. Women comprised 62% of all reports and men 38%.

⊙18% of NC's total population is 60 years of age and older.

⊙68% of the reported adults were White, 29% were Black, 1% was Hispanic, and the remaining 2% were Native American, Asian and others.

⊙North Carolina's APS law requires each of NC's 100 county departments of social services across the state to respond to reports alleging adults with disabilities have been abused, neglected or exploited and are in need of protective services.

The Face of Elder Abuse

⊙The public has not embraced elder abuse as a public policy issue. This type of family violence hovers below the nation's consciousness. It lacks a coherent public identity. The elder adult's suffering is often in silence.

⊙Women, 80 years of age and older, who live in a domestic setting comprise the majority of Elder Abuse reports.

⊙The risk of elder abuse seems to be particularly high when adult children live with the elder adult. These adult children often need their parent(s) support because of personal problems, such as mental illness, alcohol or drug abuse.

⊙Abusers may be dependent on their victims for money, housing, and other forms of support and often isolate them from other family members and friends.

⊙Self Neglect accounts for the majority of the cases reported to Adult Protective Services.

SOME SIGNS OF ABUSE

- Bruises, black eyes, welts, lacerations, and rope marks
- Bone fractures, broken bones, skull fractures
- Open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing
- Broken eyeglasses, physical signs of being subjected to punishment
- Reports of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated
- An elder's sudden change in behavior
- Threats and intimidation causing mental anguish

SIGNS OF EXPLOITATION

- Stolen ATM, Debit, or Credit Cards by caregivers or family members
- Signing deeds to real property, loan papers or withdrawal slips through deception or coercion
- Abuse of Power of Attorney authorization
- Telemarketing/sweepstake scams
- Investment fraud

SIGNS OF CARETAKER NEGLECT/SELF NEGLECT

- Pressure Ulcers
- Unsafe and/or unsanitary living conditions
- Lack of medical care
- Malnutrition and/or dehydration
- Hoarding
- Poor hygiene
- Not wearing suitable clothing for the weather
- Confusion

MOST FREQUENTLY NAMED PERPETRATORS

- Adult Child
- Spouse, Other Relatives
- Non-Relative Caretaker
- Facility Staff

For More Information Contact
North Carolina Division of Aging and
Adult Services 919.733.3818
www.ncdhhs.gov/aging

Your Local Social Services
www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/local