

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse about one in ten Americans over the age of 60 years has experienced abuse; this represents an estimated five million older adults, according to the national Administration on Community Living. Although no single definition of elder abuse exists nationwide or across disciplines, the Center on Elder Abuse's 2018 factsheet on elder abuse defines abuse as "intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that causes harm to an older person." Abuse can take many forms, including: neglect and isolation; physical, sexual and financial abuse; and, emotional or psychological abuse. It lists common risk factors as dementia, mental health or substance abuse issues of an older person and/or a perpetrator, social isolation and poor physical health.

Elder and dependent adult abuse is a crime. The primary responsibility for protecting the rights of vulnerable adults rests with the states. California is one state leading with legislative efforts acknowledging this serious and growing crisis. California's elder and dependent adult justice partners aim to provide an opportunity for communities to promote a better understanding of elder and dependent adult abuse and neglect by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting abuse and neglect. There are an estimated 196,000 cases of elder and dependent adult abuse per year in California, and current estimates are that as few as one in twenty-four reports of elder and dependent adult abuse cases is recorded. In Solano County, the Older & Disabled Adult Services Bureau for calendar year 2017 received 1627 reports of abuse.

The abuse of elderly, dependent and vulnerable adults can be addressed by greater community awareness and involvement, good public policy and strong social support systems. Every elder, dependent and vulnerable adult living in Solano County deserves a life filled with dignity, respect and the right to live safely in the least restrictive environment, whether in their homes or health care facilities, and to enjoy an optimum quality of life while being protected from all forms of abuse.

The Solano County District Attorney's Office will host the 3rd annual Elder Abuse Forum on June 13, 2018 at the Solano County Events Center from 9:00am to 12:00pm. This free event will include: an update on the state of APS by the California Department of Social Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program for Contra Costa and Solano, training for Culturally Specific Outreach in Relationship to Financial Abuse Among Elders by the Elder and Dependent Adult Protection Team of San Mateo County, a report from the Elder Justice Collaborative by the Senior Advocacy Services of Sonoma County and the Contra Costa County Family Justice Center and a report on the San Francisco Elder Abuse Forensic Center from the City and County of San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult services. The forum is meant to give our community a platform for raising awareness of elder, dependent and vulnerable adult abuse and to renew a commitment to address the issue.

H&SS, and in particular its Older and Disabled Adult Services (ODAS) Bureau, works continuously to address this problem through procedures and programs that increase awareness of the issue and encourage or require social work professionals and others to report abuse when it is observed or suspected. The ODAS Bureau also works with the Solano County District Attorney's Office, the Senior Coalition of Solano County, the Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention and its many partner agencies, law enforcement representatives, the Solano County Long-Term Care Ombudsman, NorthBay Healthcare, Sutter Health and Kaiser Permanente to help ensure seniors in Solano County enjoy a life of dignity and respect, free from abuse and neglect.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Board may choose not to approve this proposed resolution. This is not recommended because the resolution provides an opportunity to further raise awareness of this important issue.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

Solano County H&SS, Public Health Division, Older & Disabled Adult Services worked with the Senior Coalition of Solano County, Solano County District Attorney's Office and the Solano County Office of Family Violence Prevention on this Board Item.

CAO RECOMMENDATION:

APPROVE DEPARTMENTAL RECOMMENDATION