

Elder Abuse is a Crying Shame



A NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY RESTORING ELDER SAFETY TODAY

Winter 2012-2013

NEW GAO REPORT ON FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

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**ALTIMORE
COUNTY
RESTORING
ELDER
SAFETY
TODAY**

BC-REST is a coalition working to educate and empower the community to identify and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation in Baltimore County.

This goal is accomplished through collaborative efforts of its members and community partners. Thus far, the following innovative programs have been implemented: (1)

Project Safe to offer information about financial exploitation, (2) **Shred-A-thon Events** to prevent identity theft, (3) **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** an annual celebration, and (4) **Presentations** to provide elder abuse and prevention information. Members of this coalition include representatives from county departments including: Aging, Social Services, Health, Public Library, Human Relations Commission, and Police, as well as local organizations, businesses, and service providers.

How Can I Get Involved?

- * **Call 410-887-4200** to get on our mailing list. You will receive our newsletter and alerts about upcoming events.
- * **Inquire** about having your organization become a member of BC-REST, by calling 410-887-4200.
- * **Schedule** a presentation on elder abuse for your group by calling our office.
- * **Check out** our website, www.bcpl.info/stopelderabuse
- * **"Like"** us on facebook !

The Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a study of elder financial abuse and the federal government's response to it. The GAO contacted state and local social services, criminal justice, and consumer protection officials in four large cities, and all states with large elderly populations. They also interviewed officials in seven federal agencies and elder abuse experts.

While states have primary responsibility for combating elder financial exploitation, the GAO concluded that the federal government could disseminate information on types of federal prevention and advocacy activities. The GAO also found that older adults need more information about what constitutes elder financial exploitation in order to report and avoid it. The Elder Justice Coordinating Council, which held its first meeting in 2012, could be the vehicle for developing and implementing a coordinated national strategy to provide this public education.

Experts and officials indicated that three obstacles hinder responses to elder financial abuse: 1) gaining expertise, 2) sustaining collaboration between law enforcement and adult protective services agencies, and 3) obtaining data.

The GAO's Recommendation:

To coordinate and optimize federal efforts to prevent and respond to elder financial exploitation, the Secretary of Department of Health and Human Services should, as chairman of the Elder Justice Coordinating Council, direct the Council to develop a written national strategy... to: (1) identify and disseminate promising practices and other information nationwide that can be used by state and local agencies to prevent exploitation, educate the public, and help state and local agencies collaborate, investigate, and prosecute elder financial exploitation; (2) ensure coordination of public awareness activities across federal agencies; and (3) collect and disseminate better data nationwide to inform governmental decisions regarding prevention of and response to elder financial exploitation.

GAO-13-110, Nov 15, 2012

For more information and a link to the complete report, please visit:

<http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-13-110>

Submitted by Alan Spiegel

Save-The-Date

**ANNUAL WORLD ELDER
ABUSE AWARENESS DAY
JUNE 14, 2013**

AARP Corner

2013 Legislative Priorities for AARP Maryland

AARP's Mission:

Enhance the quality of life for all as we age—champion positive social change and deliver value through advocacy, information and service

Over 850,000 Marylanders 50+ are AARP members, making AARP the largest social change organization in the “Old Line” state. AARP works to help individuals 50+ live the lives they want to live. In 2013, AARP Maryland staff and volunteers will focus their efforts on improving healthcare access and financial security, and adapting communities for all older adults. Additionally, members look to AARP to help save them money, by fighting to keep home energy costs low or providing discounts on insurance. No matter where our members turn, they'll find AARP working to make life better. AARP fights on issues that matter to you and your family.

Utilities and Telecom Cost-Saving

The electric and gas companies in Maryland have major price increases planned as part of revenue-raising efforts to fund improvements and enhancements to the electric grid and underground pipes. While AARP generally supports modernization, if left unchallenged, the home utility rate increases would be a significant cost increase for the typical senior on a fixed income. The balance between budget-driven consumers and utility companies' modernization efforts will emerge from consumers adopting more energy efficient habits and public pressure against utility rate hike requests.

In 2013, AARP MD will work hard on behalf of our 850,000 plus members to keep utility rates affordable. First, AARP will join other consumer groups to hold down rate increases and surcharges/trackers. Second, AARP will join other consumer groups to ensure utilities continue to make their service reliable and stable without significantly raising rates. Third, AARP will partner with consumer groups to protect telephone land lines limiting services including land lines and information/emergency services.

This is the first of a three part series submitted by: Tammy Bresnahan, AARP MD Assoc. State Dir. for Communications



Who is mandated to report Elder Abuse in the state of Maryland?

Maryland law requires that law enforcement agents, human service professionals and health care practitioners report any suspected cases of elder abuse.

Can I Report Elder Abuse?

Anyone who witnesses or suspects any case of elder abuse should report it immediately and the report may be anonymous.

How Do I Report Elder Abuse?

Contact 911 or the local sheriff. To report suspected abuse in the community or an assisted living facility call: Baltimore County Department of Social Services – Adult Protective Services - 410-853-3000 – *make a language selection, then press #2 for Adult Services.*

To report suspected abuse in a nursing home call: Baltimore

County Long Term Care Ombudsman - 410-887-4200

For information about elder abuse call:

Baltimore County Department of Aging - 410-887-2594. *You may reach any of these offices with Maryland Relay 711.*

Types of Elder Abuse

Physical Abuse – Use of force to threaten or physically injure a vulnerable elder.

Emotional Abuse – Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause mental anguish, pain, or distress to a senior.

Sexual Abuse – Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.

Exploitation – Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person's money or property.

Neglect – A caregiver's failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder's safety, physical, or emotional needs.

Abandonment – Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.

Self Neglect – An inability to understand the consequences of one's own actions or inaction, which leads to, or may lead to, harm or endangerment.

Remember: You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate the suspicions.

Source: www.ncea.aoa.gov

BC-REST Newsletter Committee:
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