



NEWS COLUMN – Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Elder Abuse Awareness

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According to the Ohio Family Violence Prevention Project/Ohio Colleges of Medicine Government Resource Center, each year in our district, around 4,200 seniors age 60 and over are abused, neglected or financially exploited. June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7), which covers 10 counties in Ohio, including Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton, encourages the community to be aware and educated about elder abuse. If you or someone you know is the victim of abuse, it is important to report it to the appropriate authorities.

According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, elder abuse is a term referring to any knowing, intentional, or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult. The specificity of laws varies from state to state, but broadly defined, abuse may be:

- **Physical Abuse** - Inflicting, or threatening to inflict, physical pain or injury on a vulnerable elder, or depriving them of a basic need.
- **Emotional Abuse** - Inflicting mental pain, anguish, or distress on an elder person through verbal or nonverbal acts.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Non-consensual sexual contact of any kind.
- **Exploitation** - Illegal taking, misuse, or concealment of funds, property, or assets of a vulnerable elder.
- **Neglect** - Refusal or failure by those responsible to provide food, shelter, health care, or protection for a vulnerable elder.
- **Abandonment** - The desertion of a vulnerable elder by anyone who has assumed the responsibility for care or custody of that person.

Be aware of the risk factors and warning signs associated with elder abuse. Warning signs could include physical marks or physical mistreatment, behavioral changes, and sudden changes in financial situations. If you or someone you know has been the victim of abuse, exploitation or neglect, it is important to report the suspected abuse immediately. Call your doctor or confide in a family member or friend you trust, or call your local Adult Protective Services agency to report elder abuse occurring in the community, or statewide, call 1-855-OHIO-APS. To report abuse in long-term care facilities, call the AAA7 Ombudsman Program at 1-800-582-7277. If someone you know is in immediate, life-threatening danger, call your local police department or sheriff's office, or 9-1-1 immediately.

The AAA7 Regional Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is asking the public to take June 15th as an opportunity to honor an elder, such as: carrying their groceries, cutting their grass, taking time to visit, bringing them dinner or a bouquet of flowers, giving them a call, offering to run their errands or go to the grocery store, offering to plant flowers in their yard or plow their garden, sending them a card, taking them shopping or out to eat, having them to your home for a meal, or just by showing them kindness and appreciation! Take the opportunity on June 15th to show a senior how much they are loved and appreciated.