

## It's the Law

### You Must Report Elder Abuse.

*(Calls are confidential.)*

If you suspect or believe in good faith that an elderly person who may be incapacitated is being abused, neglected, exploited or is self-neglecting, you must report it to the NH Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services.

For information on Elder Abuse, call **1-800-949-0470**

To report Elder Abuse, call the District Office nearest you.



New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services  
Bureau of Elderly and Adult Services

#### District Offices

**Berlin**  
1-800-972-6111  
or  
(603) 752-7800

**Littleton**  
1-800-552-8959  
or  
(603) 444-6786

**Claremont**  
1-800-982-1001  
or  
(603) 542-9544

**Manchester**  
1-800-852-7493  
or  
(603) 668-2330

**Concord**  
1-800-322-9191  
or  
(603) 271-6201

**Nashua**  
1-800-852-0632  
or  
(603) 883-7726

**Conway**  
1-800-552-4628  
or  
(603) 447-3841

**Portsmouth**  
1-800-821-0326  
or  
(603) 433-8300

**Keene**  
1-800-624-9700  
or  
(603) 357-3510

**Rochester**  
1-800-862-5300  
or  
(603) 332-9120

**Laconia**  
1-800-322-2121  
or  
(603) 524-4485

**Salem**  
1-800-852-7492  
or  
(603) 893-9763

# ELDER ABUSE

Giving Voice  
to a  
Silent Problem  
in  
New Hampshire

Sponsored by the Elder Abuse Advisory Council  
NH Department of Health and Human Services  
Division of Community Based Care Services  
129 Pleasant Street  
Concord, NH 03301

# Preventing Elder Abuse

## What is Elder Abuse?

In New Hampshire, Elder Abuse is defined by law (RSA 161-F) as any action or omission that results (or could result) in harm to a vulnerable adult.

The law identifies six types of abuse.

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect
- Self-Neglect
- Exploitation

## Is Elder Abuse a Problem in New Hampshire?

Yes, and it continues to be a growing problem in New Hampshire. In 1980, there were 239 reports of Elder Abuse in the State. In fiscal year 2005 (from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005), there were 1,460 reported cases of abuse and neglect involving victims 60 years of age and older.

Elder Abuse remains a silent problem. Victims are often too frightened, ill, or ashamed to tell someone about the abuse/neglect. Friends and neighbors of the victim often don't recognize the problem, don't know what to do, or whom to tell about it.

## What are the Signs and Symptoms of Elder Abuse and Neglect?

Some of the signs and symptoms of Elder Abuse are:

- ◆ Unexplained bruises, welts, burns;
- ◆ Fear/anxiety or agitation around certain household members or caregivers;
- ◆ Changes in appetite or unusual/dramatic weight gain or loss;
- ◆ Unexplained changes in health status;
- ◆ Increasing withdrawal/isolation;
- ◆ Lack of knowledge about personal finances or conflicting stories;
- ◆ Sudden inability to pay bills or buy food;
- ◆ Dependency of adult child/caregiver on the older individual for income and/or shelter;
- ◆ Poor personal hygiene; and
- ◆ Wearing of inadequate or inappropriate clothing.

## What Can Family and Friends Do to Prevent/Stop Elder Abuse?

- ◆ Visit an elderly person often and talk with them in private;
- ◆ Be observant and listen carefully;

- ◆ Find sources and resources of help for the elderly person;
- ◆ Speak up when something looks or sounds wrong; and
- ◆ Report any suspected abuse, neglect or self-neglect.

## As an Older Adult, What Can You Do to Protect Yourself?

- ◆ Tell someone (e.g. a clergyman, family member or friend) if you are being abused or neglected;
- ◆ Don't give away money you need to live on;
- ◆ Seek medical help when you need it and don't be afraid to confide in your doctor if someone is harming you;
- ◆ Don't give away your social security number, credit card numbers or financial information to people you don't know;
- ◆ Don't let anyone keep details of your financial status from you;
- ◆ Don't sign a document until someone you trust reads it; and
- ◆ Don't live with someone who has a history of violent behavior.