

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wear Purple on June 15 to Raise Awareness of Elder Abuse

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) join Governor John R. Kasich in observing June 15 as Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Ohio. To raise awareness of available supports for older adults and their families, both agencies encourage all Ohioans to wear purple on Wednesday, June 15, as well as to learn the signs of elder abuse and know what to do if you suspect someone you know is being abused, neglected or exploited.

“Elder abuse is a terrible but preventable problem,” said ODJFS Director Cynthia C. Dungey. “It affects all socioeconomic classes, races and genders. The more we spread the word about how to recognize and report it, the easier it will be to stop it from occurring and to make sure our older friends and family members get the help they need and the care they deserve.”

“The most disturbing statistic about elder abuse is that approximately one in 10 older adults have experienced some type of abuse, yet as few as one in five cases of abuse are reported to authorities,” added ODA Director Bonnie K. Burman. “Aging is everybody’s business, which is why it is critically important that none of us turn a blind eye to abuse and neglect of an elder. Know the signs. Step up. Speak up.”

Potential signs of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation include the following:

- Signs of physical harm
- Sudden behavioral changes
- A caregiver who refuses to allow visitors to see the adult alone
- Hazardous or unsanitary living conditions
- Dehydration, malnutrition or poor personal hygiene
- Previously uninvolved relatives showing sudden interest in the adult’s affairs and possessions
- Unexplained, sudden transfers of assets or finances to an individual
- Unexplained disappearances of funds or valuable possessions
- Abrupt changes in a will, financial documents, bank accounts or banking practice

ODJFS supervises the state’s Adult Protective Services program, which helps vulnerable adults age 60 and older who are in danger of harm, are unable to protect themselves and may have no one to assist them. County departments of job and family services receive and investigate reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation and evaluate the need for protective services. Last year, county agencies received more than 16,000 reports of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation.

If you suspect an older adult is being abused, neglected or exploited, contact local law enforcement or your county department of job and family services immediately. For a directory of county agencies, go to jfs.ohio.gov/county/County_Directory.pdf.

Older Ohioans who could use some support to continue to live safely in their communities can contact their local area agency on aging. Area agencies can connect elders to community-based services and supports to maintain or increase their independence and help prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation. Area agencies also provide services and supports for family caregivers to help them be more effective at what they do. Visit aging.ohio.gov or call (866) 243-5678 to be connected to the area agency on aging serving your community.

Individuals who live in nursing homes or other care facilities also have the right to receive quality care and remain free from abuse, neglect and exploitation. Long-term care ombudsmen advocate for the rights of consumers and help resolve issues with care providers. For assistance, call (800) 282-1206. Visit stepup.ohio.gov to learn how you can volunteer to support the ombudsman program.