



NATIONAL ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Abuse/Neglect of Elders and Persons with Disabilities

Why Support Justice for Elders and Persons with Disabilities...

- The National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) was founded in 1989 and is the only national organization representing the interest of adult protective services programs, staff and the victims they serve.
- NAPSA is committed to improving the quality and availability of protective services for adults with disabilities and elders who are abused, neglected, exploited and unable to protect their own interests.
- No federal funding is dedicated to adult protective services.
- The proportion of the United States population age 60 years or older will drastically increase in the next 30 years as 77,000,000 baby boomers approach retirement and old age.
- There are 49.7 million non-institutionalized Americans with disabilities.
- Each year, anywhere between 500,000 and 5,000,000 elders and 5,000,000 other vulnerable adults in the United States are abused, neglected, or exploited.
- Abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults have no boundaries, and cross all racial, social class, gender, and geographic lines.
- Victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation are not only subject to injury from mistreatment and neglect, they are also 3.1 times more likely to die at an earlier age than expected than elders who were not victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.
- There is a general dearth of data as to the nature and scope of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults.
- Despite the dearth of data in the field, experts agree that most cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation are never reported and that abuse and neglect shorten a victim's life, often triggering a downward spiral of an otherwise productive, self-sufficient life. Programs addressing other difficult issues such as domestic violence and child abuse and neglect have demonstrated the need for a multi-faceted law, combining public health, social service, and law enforcement approaches.
- For over 20 years, Congress has been presented with facts and testimony calling for a coordinated Federal effort to combat abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults.
- The Federal Government has been slow to respond to the needs of victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults or to undertake prevention efforts.
- No Federal law has been enacted that adequately and comprehensively addresses the issues of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults and there are very limited resources available to those in the field directly dealing with these issues.
- Differences in State laws and practices in the areas of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults lead to significant disparities in prevention, protective and social services, treatment systems, and law enforcement, and lead to other inequities.

- The Federal Government has played an important role in promoting research, training, public safety, data collection, the identification, development, and dissemination of promising health care, social, and protective services, and law enforcement practices, relating to child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and violence against women. The Federal Government should promote similar efforts and protections relating to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults.
- The Federal Government should provide leadership and assist States and communities in their efforts to protect elders in the United States by—
 - promoting coordinated planning among all levels of government;
 - generating and sharing knowledge relevant to protecting elders;
 - providing leadership to combat the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the Nation's elders and other vulnerable adults; and
 - providing resources to States and communities to promote elder justice.
- The problem of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults requires a comprehensive approach that—
 - integrates the work of health, legal, and social service agencies and organizations;
 - emphasizes the need for prevention, reporting, investigation, assessment, treatment, and prosecution of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults at all levels of government;
 - ensures that sufficient numbers of properly trained personnel with specialized knowledge are in place to treat, assess, and provide services relating to abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults, and carry out elder and vulnerable adult protection duties;
 - is sensitive to ethnic and cultural diversity;
 - recognizes the role of mental health, disability, dementia, substance abuse, medication mismanagement, and family dysfunction problems in increasing and exacerbating abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults; and
 - balances adults' right to self-determination with society's responsibility to protect elders and vulnerable adults.
- The human, social, and economic cost of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults is high and includes unnecessary expenditures of Medicare and Medicaid funds.
- The failure to coordinate activities relating to, and comprehensively prevent and treat, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults threatens the future and well-being of millions of elders and other vulnerable adults in the United States.
- All elements of society in the United States have a shared responsibility in responding to a national problem of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders and other vulnerable adults.
- The 2001 National Policy Summit on elder abuse and the 1995 White House conference on aging also recommended enacting federal elder abuse legislation
- The Elder Justice Act (Senate 333), a bill to provide a federal home for adult protective services along with a consistent funding source, was introduced by Senator John Breaux and Orrin Hatch ended up 107th congress on September 13, 2002. The Elder Justice Act bill did not pass.
- The funding of the Financial Exploitation Specialist through a grant from the Administration on Aging to the Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging, the protective services provider in Philadelphia, PA, resulted in a development of a pilot program with the WACHOVIA Corporation. Within a one year period the project was able to prevent the actual lost of \$466, 914 by stopping fraudulent transactions of funds belonging to 21 elders. This comes to a lost of about \$22,000 per elder.