



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wolf Administration Observes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Harrisburg, PA – Today, the Wolf Administration observed World Elder Abuse Awareness Day as an opportunity for communities to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

“Our elders – parents, extended family, friends, and community members – deserve our respect, support, attention, and protection as they age,” Gov. Wolf said. “This is one day set aside to remind us that we must protect our older Pennsylvanians from neglect and abuse every day.”

Surrounded by protective services staff from local area agencies on aging, advocates, and stakeholders in the Main Capitol Rotunda, Pennsylvania Department of Aging Secretary Teresa Osborne applauded the commitment of those gathered to upholding the state’s Older Adults Protective Services Act.

“While we pause, today, to raise awareness about elder abuse, every day our local area agencies on aging respond to reports of abuse and take the necessary steps to prevent these incidents and protect our seniors,” said Secretary Osborne. “Older Pennsylvanians deserve a protective services system that is laser-focused on providing victims of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation with optimal care and services, and when possible, a pathway to elder justice.”

Additionally, Secretary Osborne reminded attendees that abuse and financial exploitation of the elderly touches all demographics, so being informed of potential signs that may indicate an older adult is being abused or exploited is critical. The U.S. Department of Justice estimates that one in ten older adults is a victim of elder abuse, and according to the Senate Special Committee on Aging, for every case of elder abuse reported, five go unreported. This reporting rate is even more troubling in financial abuse cases, which estimates that only one in fourteen cases are reported.

“Elder abuse can rob older adults of their independence and ability to age with dignity in their community,” said AARP Pennsylvania Communications Director Steve Gardner. “AARP is committed to strengthening Pennsylvania’s Older Adults Protective Services Act to provide additional protections against crimes targeting vulnerable older adults, including financial exploitation.”

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was created by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations in 2006 to acknowledge the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

Annual celebrations on June 15 aim to bring awareness and celebrate those who actively work to protect older adults who are most susceptible to abuse or exploitation.

Anyone can report elder abuse by calling the 24-hour statewide elder abuse hotline at 1-800-490-8505, or by contacting their local Area Agency on Aging. Pennsylvania law protects those who report suspected abuse from retaliation and civil or criminal liability; all calls are free and confidential.

To learn more about the Pennsylvania Department of Aging, visit aging.pa.gov.

Media Contact: Drew Wilburne, 717-705-3702