

Transforming Lives

July 14, 2016

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July is Adult Abuse Prevention Month

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) continues to see a sharp increase in the number of cases of adult abuse reported statewide. Adult Abuse Prevention Month is intended to raise awareness and remind everyone to remain vigilant when it comes to the health and welfare of some of Washington's most vulnerable citizens.

The amount of alleged abuse cases has more than doubled in Washington in just four years. More than **35,500 cases** of alleged abuse were reported in 2015 compared to more than **16,600** in 2011. [Adult Protective Services \(APS\)](#), which investigates cases of abuse in homes and facilities, believes the increase reflects improved awareness of adult abuse among the public, as well as an aging Baby Boomer population.

Anyone who suspects abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult is encouraged to call **1-866-ENDHARM (1-866-363-4276)**. Someone will answer your call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

In Washington, the most common form of adult abuse is financial exploitation. Other forms of abuse can include:

- Physical
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological/Emotional (Mental abuse)
- Neglect
- Abandonment
- Self-neglect
- Improper restraint

Signs of abuse include:

- Suspicious bruises, sores or weight loss
- A sudden change in personality
- Neglect of hygiene, clothing, home, medicine or food



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- Personal belongings are missing
- Verbal aggression

If suspected abuse is reported, an Adult Protective Services investigator will make an unannounced visit to the home or facility. The investigator will interview the alleged victim in private and contact law enforcement if necessary. For every case of abuse investigated, many others go unreported.

The Aging and Long-Term Support Administration is nationally recognized as a leader for serving older people in their own homes or in community residential settings. AL TSA investigates abuse, neglect, exploitation and poor care in people's own homes and in community facilities and programs it licenses and certifies. It also supports clients who are deaf and hard of hearing. The team of 1,500 serves nearly 60,000 clients on a \$1.91 billion annual budget.