

THE LINK

A Digital Digest for Iowa's Aging Network



IDA IOWA
DEPARTMENT
ON AGING

June 2023



News & Updates

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

As Iowans, we believe in hard-work, resilience, and community. Yet, an estimated 1 in 10 older Americans experience elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Working together, we can build the essential social supports that prevent abuse and keep everyone safe as we age. June 15 is recognized internationally as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD).

What is elder abuse?

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that causes harm to an older individual, 60 years of age or older. Elder abuse takes many forms, including:

- Neglect or isolation
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Financial abuse and exploitation
- Emotional or psychological abuse (including verbal abuse and threats)

Why Should We Care About Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse is a critical social, health and economic problem. Every day, headlines throughout the U.S. paint a grim picture of seniors who have been abused, neglected, and exploited, oftentimes by people they trust the most. Abusers are not limited to opportunistic strangers who prey on the vulnerable. They may be spouses, family members, personal acquaintances, or professionals that work closely with the older adult. For society, elder abuse is both a social and economic issue: it creates health care and legal costs, which are often shouldered by public programs like Medicare and Medicaid, and isolates them from the community. It is in everyone's interest to care about and prevent elder abuse.

Reporting in Iowa

In Iowa, the Adult Protective Services unit through the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) responds to allegations of dependent adult abuse for older adults in the community. The Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) investigates allegations in facility settings when the perpetrator is a staff member. The

investigates allegations in facility settings when the perpetrator is a staff member. The Iowa Department on Aging (IDA) holds contracts with 6 Area Agencies on Aging across the state, who provide community interventions to aid in elder abuse prevention and awareness.

- If you think that an older adult is in immediate, life-threatening danger, dial 911
 - If you are seeking to report dependent adult abuse in the community by a caregiver, please contact APS at 1-800-362-2178 to report dependent adult abuse
 - If you are seeking to report dependent adult abuse in a long-term care facility by a staff member, please contact DIA at 1-877-362-2178
 - For a coordinated entry point to Iowa's information and referral resources regarding long-term independent living, contact Lifelong Links at 1-866-468-7887
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Disease Prevention/ Health Promotion

Oral Health Month

Supported by the American Dental Association, Oral Health Month is a reminder about the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene. Celebrate Oral Health month by reading and sharing the "Oral Health Guide for Older Adults" found [here](#).



Legal Protections

Rural Justice Project for Older Iowans

Contact Iowa Legal Aid for more information today! Email: jgaul@iowalaw.org;
Phone: 1-800-532-1275. Press "0" for a receptionist.

[Rural Justice Project for Older Iowans Flyer.pdf](#)



Iowa Department on Aging

510 E 12th Street Ste. 2

Des Moines, Iowa 50319

515.725.3333 | 800.532.3213

www.iowaaging.gov

The mission of the Iowa Department on Aging is to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and cost-effective system of long-term living and community support service that helps older Iowans maintain health and independence in their homes and communities.