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Statewide News Release

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Kentucky Recognizes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Purple rocking chairs on display signify promise of longevity and to not forget those lost to elder abuse and neglect

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 14, 2024) – Today, Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander joined state officials and advocates to recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which is marked annually on June 15. The secretary presented the Governor's proclamation declaring June as Elder Abuse Awareness Month in Kentucky.

"We care about all our seniors and want to make sure they are free from abuse and harm," said Gov. Beshear. "Today, we remind everyone that if you suspect elder abuse, neglect and exploitation, report it by calling 1-877-KYSAFE1; or if someone is in immediate danger, call 911 or local law enforcement."

Purple flags have been assembled on Capitol grounds that will remain on display through June 30 to remind citizens to immediately report suspected elder abuse, neglect and exploitation. There are also purple rocking chairs at the Capitol today, decorated by Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse, to signify a promise of longevity and to not forget those lost to elder abuse and neglect.

During the event, the Kentucky Elder Abuse Committee presented its CHAMP – Champion of Adult Maltreatment Prevention – Awards to two individuals and two agencies. The winners were chosen based on their ability to engage in elder maltreatment prevention in their community.

- Individual CHAMP Award: Mary Crowley Schmidt, assistant director of Area Agency on Aging and Independent Living with Bluegrass Area Development District.



- Agency CHAMP Award: Buffalo Trace Area Development District, Area Agency on Aging and Independent Living.
- Individual CHAMP honorable mention: Daniel “Danny” Dittman, Department for Community Based Services Adult Protective Services employee.
- Agency CHAMP honorable mention: Pillar, a Home and Community Based Waiver service agency that operates in Jefferson and Oldham counties.

“World Elder Abuse Awareness Day provides an opportunity for communities to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes impacting elders,” said Secretary Friedlander. “It is important for everyone to know how to identify, report and prevent elder abuse and neglect.”

Kentucky’s population includes 771,605 adults over age 65 (estimate from 2022), and each year the Adult Protective Services Hotline receives an average of 21,559 reports alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation or requesting general adult services for adults ages 60 and older. Of that, an average of 6,668 investigations/assessments are completed each year, resulting in nearly 31% of all calls meeting the screening criteria for an investigation/assessment.

The state’s Department for Aging and Independent Living coordinates statewide programs and services on behalf of Kentucky elders and individuals with disabilities. Department for Aging and Independent Living Commissioner and State Elder Abuse Committee Co-Chair Victoria Elridge said, “We proudly surround ourselves in purple to acknowledge our Kentucky seniors who need assistance and to ensure they have the best quality of life.”

The [department](#) and its statewide partners provide programs and services for older adults and those with disabilities, including free meals, caregiver support services and long-term services and support information.

To join the effort in elder abuse prevention, Kentuckians are encouraged to use information from the cabinet’s social media to build awareness regarding signs of abuse and how to report it. Kentuckians can also join one of the state’s 24 local coordinated councils on elder abuse, which provide elder abuse education and outreach at the local and regional levels, depending on the needs of the communities.

Kentucky’s network involves local law enforcement, county officials, advocates, nursing homes, local businesses, social service agencies and individuals. They share a common goal of ending abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly in their communities by offering specific advocacy, outreach and prevention strategies. To find your community’s council, visit [here](#), or for training and data requests, go to [Kentucky ESTEAM](#) (Empowering Solutions To End Adult Maltreatment).

Reporting suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation is the law in Kentucky, and it’s confidential. The toll-free reporting hotline is 877-597-2331 or 877-KYSAFE1. If you believe there is imminent risk, immediately call 911 or local law enforcement. For information about signs of elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation to review and share, visit [here](#).

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