

*Editor's Note: To see photos from today's flag planting event recognizing World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, click [here](#). Credit – Governor's Communications Office*



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**Andy Beshear, Governor**

**Eric Friedlander, Secretary**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Gov. Beshear, Kentucky Leaders Take Part in Global Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**

***People should call 1-877-KYSAFE1 to report suspected abuse, neglect  
and exploitation***

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (June 15, 2021) – Gov. Andy Beshear, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman and Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander joined other state leaders, organizations statewide and national and global organizations on Tuesday to recognize the 16<sup>th</sup> annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

Kentucky leaders placed purple flags in the English Gardens on the State Capitol grounds as a public reminder to immediately report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of older adults.

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations (UN) launched on June 15, 2006, the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). WEADD serves as a call-to-action

for communities to report abuse, neglect and exploitation of elders and reaffirm their commitment to the principle of justice for all.

Gov. Beshear has joined in recognizing the awareness day for many years, including when he served from 2016 to 2019 as Kentucky's Attorney General.

"During the COVID-19 crisis, Kentuckians of all ages made sacrifices to protect the most vulnerable, including our elders. We can continue to show our commitment to older Kentuckians by reporting suspected scams, abuse and neglect immediately," the Governor said. "Everyone on Team Kentucky deserves to be safe and respected."

"When we come together, we can prevent elder abuse from happening. We can put support services in place and direct community resources toward addressing elder abuse," said Secretary Friedlander.

The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) is one CHFS agency providing support services aimed at abuse prevention.

"Elder abuse, neglect and exploitation is not something to be quiet about, and especially since some elders cannot speak for themselves. We all have a responsibility to report it," said DCBS Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub.

Department for Aging and Independent Living Commissioner Victoria Elridge, co-chair of Kentucky's State Elder Abuse Committee, said, "With other partners across the state, the statewide Elder Abuse Committee is committed to informing policymakers of changing trends and future needs of elders on a statewide level and to providing recommendations to more effectively meet the needs of an aging population."

In Kentucky, advocates of elder abuse prevention have encouraged individuals to wear purple on June 15 to show their commitment to protecting older citizens, according to Dr. Keith Knapp, who leads Kentucky's State Elder Abuse Committee with Elridge.

On Tuesday, Gov. Beshear, Lt. Gov. Coleman, Secretary Friedlander and other state government leaders and staff, including Commissioners Miranda-Straub and Elridge; Inspector General Adam Mather; Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities Commissioner Wendy Morris;

representatives of the DCBS Adult Protection Branch, DAIL employees and State Elder Abuse Committee members placed purple flags on the Capitol lawn to enhance awareness. The flags will be on display through June 30.

Kentucky received 23,766 reports alleging abuse, neglect or exploitation of people age 60 and older in state fiscal year 2020.

Kentucky is a mandatory reporting state, which means that any person who has a reasonable cause to suspect that an adult has suffered abuse, neglect or exploitation is legally obliged to report it to Adult Protective Services.

Reporting is confidential. The toll-free reporting hotline is **1-877-597-2331** or **1-877-KYSAFE1**. If you believe there is imminent risk, immediately call 911 or local law enforcement.

To join elder abuse prevention efforts, Kentuckians can join one of the state's 24 Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse or LCCEAs. LCCEAs 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 home associations, 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.

This year, councils are planning several activities around World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, including community campaigns through social media, local media and promotional giveaways and training opportunities.

LCCEA membership is free and open to anyone interested in working to prevent elder abuse in their community. To find your community's LCCEA and become involved, visit [here](#).

Learn the signs of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation [here](#).

You can find local resources to support elder Kentuckians [here](#).

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services; the Department for Community Based Services; the Department for Public Health; the Department for Aging and Independent Living; and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*