

**Kentucky Cabinet for
Health and Family Services**

**It's our business
to protect
older Kentuckians.**

**It's our responsibility
as human beings to care
about them.**

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Section 1919 of the Social Security Act.

**If you see
or suspect
neglect or
financial,
physical,
mental, or
sexual
abuse,
you must
report it.**

It's the law.

ELDER ABUSE

**Kentucky
Cabinet
for
Health and Family
Services**

**ONE
CASE IS
ONE
TOO
MANY!**



**Abuse and neglect do not
happen in every nursing,
assisted living, or long-term
care facility. Most provide
quality care. But
even one case of abuse is
one too many.**

Why We're Telling You This

Wherever older people call home – an assisted living facility, a nursing home, a health care center, or a long-term care facility, the emphasis should always be on caring. These facilities help both the old and the young, those who expect to recover fully, and those who need extended care.

Facility services should make residents' lives easier – by providing safe housing, helping them shower and dress and eat; dispensing their medicines and encouraging physical activities; providing social activities and a small community environment; and making them feel at home, as much as possible.

Just as in their own homes, residents have the right to be free from verbal, mental, sexual, and physical abuse; punishment; and involuntary isolation. They have the right to be free from drug-induced or inappropriate physical restraints. They have the right to be free from neglect.

But even in their own homes, they can be abused and neglected. And it can happen in a care facility, too. Staff watch for it and report it.

Now we're asking you to help us watch for it because...

even one case of abuse or neglect is

ONE TOO MANY.

Who the Abusers Are

An abuser can be a caregiver, health-care worker, facility employee, visitor, or family member.

What to Watch For

Signs of elder abuse can range from serious physical injuries to less noticeable signs of neglect. If you notice a number of these signs, it could indicate that an elderly person is being abused. Remember, however, that some of these signs can be caused by medications, medical conditions, or simply the process of aging.

- ◆ Obvious malnutrition, dehydration, and weight loss; dirty, uncombed hair and offensive body odor; inadequate clothing; lack of medications; too much medication causing excessive sleepiness; missing glasses, dentures, or hearing aids; missing walker, wheelchair, or other items or services that could give the person more independence.
- ◆ Broken bones, welts, cuts, punctures, and burns, especially if they occur in unusual or unexpected places and the explanations of the injuries don't seem realistic. Frequent bruising, especially on the upper arms or thighs (from holding or shaking), and bruises

that appear to be centered in a particular area from repeated hitting or are similar in shape to an object.

- ◆ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing; difficulty in walking or sitting; pain, itching, bruising, or bleeding in the genital area; loss of bowel and bladder control; fear of a particular person or place, such as the bathroom.
- ◆ Sudden dramatic changes in behavior: appears withdrawn, depressed, hesitant to talk openly; fearful, hopeless, anxious; angry or agitated; confused, disoriented; trembling, clinging; lack of eye contact.
- ◆ Unusual activity in bank account; sudden large withdrawals, expenditures not consistent with past financial history; rights signed away on legal papers; use of Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) when the person cannot walk or get to an ATM; unfamiliar signatures on checks.

What to Do

If you think you see signs of abuse or neglect, report it as soon as you can to the facility administrator or other key staff and then call the:

- ◆ **Cabinet for Health and Family Services' Abuse Hotline 1-800-752-6200.**

For more information or assistance, call the:

- ◆ CHFS Long-Term Care Ombudsman at **1-800-372-2991**;
- ◆ CHFS Office of the Inspector General at **1-502-564-2800**; or
- ◆ CHFS Office of Aging Services at **1-502-564-6930**.