

## ***REPORT ELDER ABUSE...IT'S THE LAW!***

**Call 401-462-0555**

**Get help for the elder. Get help for the family.**

The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) estimates that one in 20 elders is a victim of abuse. The NCPEA also estimates that only one in every 14 cases of elder abuse is ever reported. Since Rhode Island enacted a mandatory elder abuse reporting law in 1980, the Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs (DEA) has investigated more than 12,000 cases of **community-based** elder abuse.

**Elder abuse occurs when a caregiver, family member or other person with a duty to care for an elder (residing in their own home or in a community setting) mistreats, neglects or financially exploits a person 60 or older.**

**Rhode Island law 42-66-8 states that any individual suspecting abuse of a person age 60 and older is required to file a report with DEA. To file a report, call 462-0555. Failure to report abuse of an elder may result in a fine of up to \$1,000.00.**

Written reports may also be addressed to: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, Division of Elderly Affairs Protective Service Unit, Louis Pasteur Building, 57 Howard Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Cranston, RI 02920.

Fax referrals are also accepted from aging network agencies and professionals. These referrals must be completed on the DEA Protective Services Referral Form. Call 401-462-0555 to request a copy of this form. Completed referrals should be faxed to 401-462-0545.

**REPORTS CAN BE FILED ANONYMOUSLY. ALL REPORTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.**

### **KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT ELDER ABUSE. ELDER ABUSE IS NOT A NORMAL WAY OF LIFE!**

- **Elder abuse knows no boundaries.** Elder abuse happens in every city and town. Victims of elder abuse can be poor or wealthy, educated or illiterate, healthy or sick, men or women.
- **Elder abuse is family issue.** In most cases, spouses, children or relatives caring for the elder person are the abusers.
- **Abuse can be physical or sexual...**such as hitting, pushing, shoving or forcing an elder to suffer an unwanted sexual advance or assault.
- **Abuse can be neglect...**such as withholding food, medicine, personal care, companionship, or needed services.
- **Abuse can be financial exploitation...**such as using or living off an elder's income or assets without their knowledge or permission.
- **Abuse can be verbal or psychological...**such as yelling at, intimidating or demeaning an elder.

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