

National Center on Elder Abuse

NCEA E-NEWS

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Florida Launches Statewide Public Awareness Campaign



Image created by Saudade Benjamin, Florida DOEA.

We recently spoke with Stacy Merritt, State Elder Abuse Prevention Program Coordinator of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) about the state's new elder abuse prevention campaign, "The Power to Prevent Elder Abuse is in Your Hands."

When Stacy Merritt of the Florida DOEA began to envision a statewide campaign to raise awareness of elder abuse, she ... *(continued on page 2)*

Florida Public Awareness Campaign Underway

(continued from front page)

The outreach campaign is designed “to create awareness about elder abuse and to empower Florida residents of all ages to take an active role in preventing elder abuse...”.

“The elder abuse prevention coordinators throughout the state are the heart and soul of the endeavor to spread awareness and education on elder abuse prevention in the community.”

*Stacy Merritt,
Program Coordinator*

considered hiring a public relations firm adept in promoting social issues and experienced in working with limited budgets. But the DOEA Communications Team approached her with the idea of creating their own campaign. Within months, the team had designed a public relations campaign with a compelling central image, an integrated tagline, and a stylized logo that they hope will come to be recognized throughout the state as a symbol for the prevention of elder mistreatment.

“The campaign to create awareness about elder abuse, and to empower Florida residents *of all ages* to take an active role in *preventing* elder abuse, couldn’t have happened without the dedication of the Communications Team,” Ms. Merritt says. Under the direction of Frank Penela, the team consists of graphics consultant Saudade Benjamin, Kassandra Elekes, Community Relations Manager, Erica Villanueva, and Liz Jameson.

Using the resources available, the team enlisted the help of other DOEA members, their friends, families, and associates who participated in photo shoots, brainstorming sessions, and informal focus groups. The cornerstone image ultimately selected for the campaign – an intergenerational network of hands cupping a delicate and tattered red paper heart -- was actually the original photo taken and enhanced by Ms. Benjamin. According to Ms. Merritt, this was the image that viewers found most moving.

Ms. Merritt is acutely aware of how invisible the problems of elder mistreatment remain, regardless of the increase in national reporting statistics. “Despite a degree in gerontology and experience at the Department of Aging and Mental Health at University of South Florida, I had never heard the term ‘elder abuse’ until I considered applying for this position.”

In creating the outreach strategy, Ms. Merritt studied other statewide and regional abuse prevention campaigns and borrowed best practices from other social marketing initiatives. Dissemination of the message ranges from small but comprehensive measures (for example, including outreach literature in pharmacy bags and Meals on Wheels packets) to large scale promotions. Radio stations throughout Florida are currently airing a newly created PSA on financial exploitation, and Ms. Merritt is collaborating with the Florida Outdoor Advertising Association (FOAA) through its public service program to post billboards. Local media interviews are also slated.

Notes Ms. Merritt, “The elder abuse prevention coordinators throughout the state are the heart and soul of the endeavor to spread ... *(continued on page 3)*

Florida Public Awareness Campaign Underway

(continued from page 2)

awareness and education throughout the community.”

The eleven Area Agencies on Aging coordinators have provided feedback on the final product, and will be vital to the success of broadcasting the message on a grassroots level.

The campaign was launched in January, 2008. Outreach efforts will continue to expand. Enhancing the safety and well-being of Florida residents will not only involve educating the public at large, but educating professional groups about the potential for abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In order to raise professional awareness, Ms. Merritt hopes to create partnerships with the state’s higher education institutions in order to bring elder abuse experts into the classrooms of health care and social service students.

For additional information on “The Power to Prevent Elder Abuse is in Your Hands” campaign, email Ms. Merritt at: Merritts@elderaffairs.org. Ms. Merritt is also a member of the Florida Select Panel for Adult Protective Services.

NCEA Kicks Off Young Artists Competition

February 1st was the official start of the NCEA Arts Competition which is being piloted among high school students at the Cab Calloway School of the Arts in Wilmington, Delaware. The theme of this year’s contest is “Why Should I Care About Elder Abuse?”

Sharon Merriman-Nai, project director of University of Delaware NCEA activities and Carolyn Petrak, newly hired director of social marketing visited eleven visual arts, film studies, and English classes. In all, they met with approximately 150 students from 9th through 12th grade, and they were pleasantly surprised at the interest the students showed in the subject and in the competition.

They began by asking students if they had ever heard the phrase “elder abuse” and what they thought it meant.

“It was really interesting, but in ten of the groups, the first example given was nursing home neglect. Some of the students looked shocked when we explained that neglect and abuse could also occur in private homes,” said Ms. Petrak.

The students also described examples of elder maltreatment that were illustrative of financial exploitation, including undue influence.

About half of the students asked for flyers describing the competition guidelines, and indicated that they might want to participate. “Coming into the classrooms really made a difference – many more students showed an interest in participating once they started talking about the subject today,” according to Lisa Coburn, the English teacher who volunteered to act as point person.

The project is designed to get younger people thinking and talking about elder abuse: what it may look like, and how it may affect older individuals they know. In addition, exemplary entries may be incorporated into NCEA outreach materials. The contest runs through March 3, 2008. Students are invited to submit entries in either writing categories (essay, poetry one-act plays, PSA scripts, etc.) or multimedia/visual arts (video, painting, posters, etc.).

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Arts Competition

(continued from page 3)

“Whether the contest generates many entries remains to be seen. But at the end of the day, we had spoken with a lot of kids, and hopefully opened some eyes,” said Ms. Petrak.

In addition to showcasing thought provoking entries, NCEA plans to present a “lessons learned” from the pilot, and to consider how useful the contest may be, once it is fine-tuned, in bringing younger voices into awareness and prevention efforts.

For more information on this project, please contact Sharon Merriman-Nai at ncea-info@aoa.hhs.gov or 302-831-3525.

Elder Justice Community Collaborations Mini-Grant Update

The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA) is currently in the process of notifying applicants for the NCEA Elder Justice Community Collaborations mini-grants of their award status.

The goal of the project is to develop self-sustaining multidisciplinary community approaches for elder abuse prevention, identification, and intervention. In addition to funding new collaborations, NCPEA will provide training, support, and technical assistance to awardees.

The March issue of the NCEA E-NEWS will feature profiles of awardees.

NCEA Training Library for Adult Protective Services and Elder Abuse and The Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly/CANE

The NCEA is continuing to enhance information resources through updated technology.

Anne Kincaid, Project Coordinator for NAPSA’s NCEA activities, is in the process of converting the national elder abuse training library into a digital resource center. In collaboration with REFT, the consultants who created the library, Ms. Kincaid is evaluating and reorganizing current holdings, and digitizing paper manuals and educational materials for electronic dissemination. Ultimately, the process will provide professionals across disciplines immediate and inexpensive access to state of the art information and practices in order to better serve older individuals. The digitization of the library is anticipated to be complete this summer. (For more on the training library, [click here](#).)

The CANE database, which catalogs peer-reviewed literature on elder mistreatment and related issues, is also undergoing a transition. The new website, which will be online this spring, will offer users more search options, including the ability to view the most recently added annotated citations. The conversion will allow CANE staff to update the catalog more frequently, which means that CANE visitors can stay abreast of the latest published research. The site will migrate to a new server that will accommodate greater web traffic. (To visit the CANE website, [click here](#); to visit the CANE Bibliography Series, [click here](#).)

Both the training library and CANE will remain fully functional during these transitions.

What Do You Think? Question of the Month

What do you think is the greatest barrier to promoting awareness of elder abuse not only to the public, but to professional groups as well?

We welcome readers' thoughts on this topic. Email your comments to NCEA-info@aoa.hhs.gov.

We will include excerpts of answers in next month's newsletter, along with a new question to consider.

Thanks!

January's Question of the Month:

What is the greatest barrier you face in intervening in cases of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation?

Competent elders will refuse an investigation and/or refuse to allow the Protective Service Caseworker to talk with the Alleged Perpetrator, especially when the perpetrator is an adult child. Elders can be very protective of their children. Additionally, after gathering information on family history and family dynamics, many of these elders have often been enablers of their children for many decades and they have difficulty with insight into the reasons, behaviors of their children and themselves. Many times it takes multiple reports and/or the elders' failing health before they wish intervention such as getting a No trespass order, pressing charges, barring access to accounts, talk therapy etc.

Linda Puzan, LICSW
Dir. of Elder Protective Service Program
Franklin County Home Care Corp.
Turner Falls, MA

National Directory of Title IIIB Legal Providers Available Online

With funding from the U.S. Administration on Aging, the [AARP Foundation Technical Support for Legal Hotlines Project](#) "provides technical assistance, information, and consultation to managers of legal hotlines and organizations interested in developing legal hotlines."

The project has developed two valuable online resource directories: the [Statewide Senior Legal Hotlines Listings](#) and the [Directory of Title IIIB Legal Providers](#).

For more information on the Support for Legal Hotlines Project, [click here](#).

State News - Update

The American Bar Association Commission on Law and Aging releases: “State Adult Guardianship Legislation: Directions of Reform,”

To view the entire report on-line, visit

http://www.abanet.org/aging/legislativeupdates/docs/State_Grd_07_final_1-08_V2.doc

Annually, the American Bar Association’s Commission on Law and Aging reviews state guardianship activity. In this month’s “state update,” we provide highlights from the Commission’s report, compiled by Erica Wood. Overall, there was a significant increase in statewide guardianship legislative activity from the previous year. According to the report, especially noteworthy activity occurred in Arkansas, Connecticut, Nevada, Texas, and Washington,

Connecticut:

Enactment of Public Act 07-116 *(pp. 1-4)*

State law was modernized to reflect a “person-centered” approach, building upon the concept of limited conservatorship. The definition of incapacity was amended in several key ways and procedural due process protections have been enhanced. Notably, at each stage of the process, the courts are “required to evaluate whether a respondent’s needs are currently being or could be met by a means that is less restrictive than appointment of a conservator....”

In addition, major amendments to the appeals process were incorporated.

Washington: SB 5320 *(pp. 5-6)*

In response to the state bar’s Public Guardianship Task Force, which “estimated an unmet need for guardianship services at approximately 4,500 people statewide...” legislation was passed that created the Office of Public Guardianship within the Administrative Office of the Courts. The implementation of the act will first be piloted in at least one rural and one urban region. Among other provisions, the act will establish minimum standards of practice; guidelines for certification of public guardians, guidelines for oversight and staffing ratios; and accountability measures.

Arkansas: SB 820 *(pp. 6-7)*

The new law creates an Office of Public Guardian for Adults within the state’s Division of Aging and Adult Services. Provisions present guidelines and qualifications for the appointment of a Public Guardian that minimize the potential for conflicts of interest. Implementation of the law is contingent upon appropriations, with no current specific plans.

Nevada: SB 157 *(pp. 7-8)*

SB 157 now “requires” (versus “allows” under earlier versions) a board of county commissioners to establish an Office of Public Guardian under one of four models of implementation. Among other provisions, county public guardians are required to appoint at least one deputy to meet program needs.

Texas *(pp. 8-9)*

The state legislature generated 11 bills addressing multiple aspects of guardianship, including: filing fees, multi-state guardianship proceedings, provisional certification, and money management by guardianship programs.

Arizona, California, the District of Columbia, Idaho, Illinois, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Dakota, Rhode Island, and Virginia were among the additional states active in this area.

For more details on these reforms, [click here](#).

Federal Legislation Update:

A Monthly Look at Legislative Activity that May Impact Older Individuals

The **Elder Justice Act (S. 1070/H.R. 1783)** gained the support of Representatives Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. (D, GA-2), Gene Green (D, TX-29) and Chris Van Hollen (D, MD-8) in January, bringing the total to 89 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives and 19 co-sponsors in the Senate.

S. 1070 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)
H.R. 1783>> [Click here to read the House bill.](#)

The **Community Choice Act (S. 799/ H.R. 1621)**, introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) in March, would amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act "...to provide services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the individual's needs, and to provide equal access to community-based attendant services and supports in order to assist individuals in achieving equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency...." In January, the bill received additional support from Representatives Marcy Kaptur (D, OH-9), Michael F. Doyle (D, PA-14), Elijah E. Cummings (D, MD-7), John Lewis (D, GA-5), Patrick J. Kennedy (D, RI-1), Edolphus Towns (D, NY-10), Sam Farr (D, CA-17), Nick Lampson (D, TX-22), Henry A. Waxman (D, CA-30), Hilda L. Solis (D, CA-32), Mike Ferguson (R, NJ-7), Collin C. Peterson (D, MN-7), Rahm Emanuel (D, IL-5), Bart Gordon (D, TN-6), Brad Miller (D, NC-13), Patrick J. Murphy (D, PA-8), Robert C. "Bobby" Scott (D, VA-3), Susan A. Davis (D, CA-53) and Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D, IL-2), bringing the total number of co-sponsors to 70 in the House of Representatives and 19 in the Senate.

S. 799 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)
H.R. 1621 >> [Click here to read the House bill.](#)

The **Stop Senior Suicide Act (S.1854/ H.R.4897)**, introduced in the Senate by Harry Reid (D-NV) in July 2007, was introduced in the House of Representatives by Darlene Hooley (D, OR-5) in December. The bill seeks to "amend the Social Security Act and the Public Health Service Act to improve elderly suicide early intervention and prevention strategies." The bill has been co-sponsored by Representatives Tim Murphy (R, PA-18), Rosa L. DeLauro (D, CT-3), Stephanie Tubbs Jones (D, OH-11), Patrick J. Kennedy (D, RI-1), Ron Klein (D, FL-22), Carolyn McCarthy (D, NY-4), Doris O. Matsui (D, CA-5), Jim Ramstad (R, MN-3), and Albert Russell Wynn (D, MD-4), which brings the total number of co-sponsors to 9 in the House and 3 in the Senate. The bill has been referred to the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee.

S.1854 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill.](#)
H.R.4897 >> [Click here to read the House bill.](#)

The **Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act of 2007 (H.R.2032)**, introduced in the House of Representatives by Peter A. DeFazio (D, OR-4) in April 2007, seeks to establish a "consumer price index for elderly consumers to compute cost-of-living increases for Social Security and Medicare benefits under titles

(continued on p8)

Federal Legislation Update - Continued

II and XVIII of the Social Security Act.” The bill gained additional support in January 2008 from Representatives Barney Frank (D, MA-4), Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. (D, IL-2), and Keith Ellison (D, MN-5), bringing the total number of co-sponsors to 41.

H.R.2032 >> [Click here to read the House bill.](#)

On January 31, 2008, the U.S.Senate Special Committee on Aging sponsored a hearing entitled, “**Older Voters: Opportunities and Challenges for the 2008 Election.**”

[Click here to access the hearing webcast.](#)

Funding Opportunities

HOPE Grants

Helping Outreach Programs to Expand (HOPE) awards grants to improve outreach to, and services for, crime victims. Grassroots, nonprofit, community-based, and faith-based victim services organizations are among those eligible to apply. (Office of Victims of Crime/OVC)

Application deadline: Open, dependent upon available funding.
For more information, [click here.](#)

Seventh Annual MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Awards

This award program is intended to recognize, strengthen, and sustain exemplary police and community collaborations. The Special Strategy Awards identifies a number of topic areas of particular focus, including “Seniors and Safety.”

Application deadline: Preliminary applications are due Friday, February 29, 2008.
For more information, [click here.](#)

FY 2008 National Field-Generated Training, Technical Assistance, and Demonstration Projects Grants

These OVC awards are designed to support the development of national initiatives that expand the capacity of service providers to address the needs of crime victims. Elder abuse is one of the program’s areas of focus.

Application deadline: February 21, 2008, for National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims grants, and May 29, 2008, for all others
For more information, [click here.](#)

Elder Abuse Research and Literature

The Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE) maintains an annotated catalog of peer-reviewed literature on elder mistreatment and related issues. The following are highlights of recently identified publications. To search for additional references, visit the [CANE website](#).

An Assessment of the Attitudes of Potential Caregivers Toward the Abuse of Elderly Persons With and Without Dementia

Matsuda, O.

International Psychogeriatrics

Vol. 19 (5), 892-901; 2007.

Research has shown that elderly adults with dementia are at an increased risk of being abused. This study examined the impact of dementia on potential caregivers' perceptions of elder abuse. One-hundred and thirty-five Japanese adults completed a questionnaire gauging their attitudes towards a range of abusive behaviors hypothetically committed against elders with and without dementia. Results indicate that abusive behavior is often considered less severe when it is perpetrated against an elderly person with dementia, compared to when it is perpetrated toward an elderly person without. Future studies exploring the role attitude plays in the actual occurrence of elder abuse committed against individuals with dementia are suggested.

Separate and Unequal: Racial Segregation and Disparities in Quality across U.S. Nursing Homes

Smith, D., Feng, Z., Fennell, M., Zinn, J. & Mor, V.

Health Affairs

Vol. 26 (5), 1448-1458; September/October 2007.

This study analyzed secondary data to examine racial segregation in U.S. nursing homes and its effect on quality of care. Data drawn from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) and the nursing home Minimum Data Set (MDS) for the year 2000 were analyzed using the Dissimilarity Index to determine levels of segregation. Quality indicators were developed to measure inspection, staffing and financial deficiencies. Findings confirmed that relatively high levels of segregation persist in long-term care with predominantly black nursing homes scoring lower in terms of quality of care, in each category, compared to predominantly white nursing homes

Using Assessing Care of Vulnerable Elders Quality Indicators to Measure Quality of Hospital Care for Vulnerable Elders

Arora, V., Johnson, M., Olson, J., Podrazik, P., Levine, S., DuBeau, C., Sachs, G. & Meltzer, D.

Journal of the American Geriatrics Society (JAGS)

Vol. 55, p1705-p1711 2007

This study used a modified set of the *Assessing Care of Vulnerable Elders (ACOVE)* quality indicators (QIs) to measure the quality of hospital care in a sample of 328 elderly patients. Results indicate that care processes specifically for conditions associated with elderly patients were generally of inferior quality compared to care processes associated with general medicine. This suggests a need for improved assessment practices to evaluate quality-of-care received by vulnerable elders, strategies to improve deficient areas, and improvements in staff training.

Special thanks to Liz Kowalczyk of the University of Delaware Center for Community Service and Research for compiling both the research and federal legislation summaries.

Calendar of Events

February 20-21, 2008

Office of Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center:

Identity Theft

Albuquerque, NM

Website: [Click Here](#)

March 26-30, 2008

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) and the American Society on Aging (ASA) Annual Joint Conference: Aging in America

Marriot Wardman Park Hotel and the Omni Shoreham Hotel — Washington, D.C.

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 415-974-9675

May 5 – 6, 2008

Legal Assistance for Seniors' 4th Annual Elder Abuse Conference

Hilton Oakland Airport Hotel – Oakland, CA

Website: [Click Here](#)

February 11 - 12, 2008
2nd Annual International Conference on

Elder Abuse

The Marriott Newport Beach Hotel & Spa -
Newport Beach, CA

This course is designed for physicians, healthcare professionals, and others who work with older adults.

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 310-437-0555. ext. 125

February 28-29, 2008

American Psychological Association (APA)

Summit on Violence and Abuse

in Relationships: Connecting Agendas and Forging New Directions

Hyatt Regency — Bethesda, Maryland

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: (512) 845-9059

April 22 - 24, 2008

International Family Justice Center Conference

Westin Horton Plaza – San Diego, CA

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 888-511-FJCA

May 15-16, 2008

Regional APS Conference

Sheraton Hotel - Arlington, TX For more information contact [Valencia](#)

[Gill-Hooper, LMSW](#)

Telephone: 214-670-0793

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NCEA Grantees:

Clearinghouse on Abuse and
Neglect of the Elderly,
University of Delaware (CANE-UD)
On the Web at: www.cane.udel.edu

National Adult Protective Services
Association (NAPSA)
On the Web at: www.apsnetwork.org

National Committee for the
Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA)
One the Web at:
www.preventelderabuse.org

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