
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**ALAMEDA COUNTY RALLIES COMMUNITY TO FIGHT ELDER ABUSE
Social Services Agency, District Attorney's Office Lead Special Event at County Fair**

(Pleasanton, CA) – Alameda County's leaders are marking Elder Abuse Awareness Month by recruiting the entire community to help protect Alameda County's growing senior population—approximately 225,000 people over the age of 65 who make up approximately 13.5 percent of all County residents.

On June 15, 2019, the Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA) will join forces with community partners to present a special event marking World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and Elder Abuse Awareness Month. ACSSA staff, District Attorney Nancy O'Malley, Legal Assistance for Seniors, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, Alameda County Treasurer and Tax Collector's Office, and the Advisory Commission on Aging will gather under one tent at the County Fair to provide information and resources on elder justice issues, recruit volunteer ombudsmen to advocate for seniors in long-term care facilities, and encourage Alameda County residents age 55 and older to make their voices heard through the [community assessment survey for the 2021-2024 Countywide Older Adults Plan](#).

Lori A. Cox, Director of the ACSSA, explained that the Alameda County Fair is an ideal venue for the County's message. "The County Fair brings together approximately half a million people from across our diverse community each year – this is the perfect venue for a public awareness campaign like this one because we need everyone to get involved."

The ACSSA has also relaunched its public service announcement "Don't Worry Mom," which brings attention to the issue of Elder Financial Abuse. Elder financial abuse is one of the most under-reported crimes in America and has been called the fastest growing crime of the twenty-first century. It does not discriminate and touches all socio-economic and ethnic communities. A beloved grandparent, parent, neighbor, friend, or even you could fall victim to this silent predator. The National Council on Aging reports that as many as five million elders are abused each year, yet it is estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of abuse ever come to the attention of officials.

Elder abuse can take several forms: physical, psychological/emotional, neglect and financial. In Alameda County, more than 70 percent of reports of abuse are financial in nature. A senior may have been tricked into paying cash for unnecessary work on their home or encouraged to donate to a fictitious charity. A senior may be a victim of identity theft when a trusted family member gains access to their Social Security number.

This past year, ACSSA's Adult Protective Services received approximately 6,000 reports of elder abuse and neglect – and that's most likely a tiny fraction of the problem in Alameda County alone, according to Randy Morris, Assistant Agency Director for the Adult and Aging Services Department. He added, "The growing statistic that should concern all of us is the numbers of seniors who are swelling the homeless ranks. In most instances seniors find themselves homeless because they have fallen victim to financial exploitation or property theft."

But he noted that it doesn't have to end this way. "We offer services to victims who have been financially exploited, and in many cases we are able to intervene before their savings are wiped out. That is why it is so important to report abuse when it is first suspected."

Morris also points to recent gains. The AARP and the World Health Organization have welcomed the County into their Network of [Age-Friendly States and Communities](#). ACSSA is also working to connect 48,000 senior and disabled residents with vital CalFresh benefits for which they may now be eligible, thanks to the end of a 40-year rule that previously barred Supplemental Security Income/State Supplementary Payment (SSI/SSP) from receiving CalFresh. "These are examples of what is possible when we take a strategic approach to these problems," he said.

Elder Abuse Awareness Event: Saturday, June 15, 2019, 1:30 pm
Alameda County Fairgrounds, 4501 Pleasanton Avenue, Pleasanton, CA 94566
On the lawn in front of Heritage House (see attached diagram)

Boomer Fridays: ACSSA is also sponsoring free County Fair admission for seniors (age 62 and up) until 5 p.m. on June 14, 21, 28 and July 5. [Click here for more information.](#)

[For more on preventing, recognizing, and reporting Elder Abuse in Alameda County, click this link.](#)

Photo Captions:

1. Alameda County marks the beginning of Elder Abuse Awareness Month with a proclamation. L to R: Alicia Morales, Director of ACSSA's Division of Aging and Adult Protection; Cheryl Poncini, Deputy District Attorney; County Supervisor Wilma Chan; and Sabrina Farrell, Assistant District Attorney.
2. Diagram of location for June 15 Elder Abuse Awareness Event

