



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SpeakUpAZ.org - It's Our Responsibility

Arizona Launches Campaign to Raise Awareness and Prevention of Abuse and Neglect of Vulnerable Adults

PHOENIX - (June 26, 2023) Governor Katie Hobbs and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today the new public awareness campaign, [SpeakUpAZ.org](https://speakupaz.org), to educate all Arizonans about the prevalence of abuse and neglect among vulnerable adults, as well as how to prevent, identify and report it.

"Abuse, neglect and exploitation can happen to anyone, but together, we can start the conversation and make a difference," said Governor Katie Hobbs. "Our initiative, [SpeakUpAZ.org](https://speakupaz.org), encourages you to speak out if you see signs of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Your voice can save lives. Let's create a safer Arizona for everyone."

"Abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults often goes unreported, but by understanding the signs of abuse and what we can do to prevent and report it, we can ensure adults in need can receive critical and potentially life saving support," said DES Director Angie Rodgers. "[SpeakUpAZ.org](https://speakupaz.org) reinforces the message that it is our responsibility. All of us must be vigilant and do our part for the safety and wellbeing of those who are most at risk in our communities."

In 2019, the Abuse and Neglect Prevention Task Force was created to ensure the health and safety of Arizona's most at-risk citizens. The Task Force examined a broad range of concerns and opportunities aimed at enhancing the prevention of abuse and neglect, and released a series of recommendations the State should take to further this goal. This includes a robust public awareness campaign to educate all Arizonans about the prevalence of abuse and neglect, as well as how to prevent, identify and report it.

To this end, DES partnered with the Governor's Office and other state agencies to develop the [SpeakUpAZ.org](https://speakupaz.org) campaign to further this initiative and serve as a resource to the public. The State's goal is for all Arizonans to recognize and report the signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so that all individuals can do their part in protecting adults from harm. The campaign will also serve as a resource for potential victims to know who to turn to for help and

support. The robust [SpeakUpAZ.org](https://www.speakupaz.org) campaign will include commercials, billboards, social media and more, to help spread the word across Arizona communities.

"Arizona's Medicaid program exists to serve low-income individuals who otherwise would not have a source of health care coverage. Today, that's nearly one-third of our state. It's critical that we as a statewide community do all we can to not only protect Arizonans from abuse and neglect, but to speak up when we see it," said Carmen Heredia, AHCCCS director.

"Some of the most vulnerable adults in Arizona reside in our licensed health care facilities. Raising public awareness about how to recognize and report the signs of abuse, neglect, and exploitation is essential to protect all Arizonans in this vulnerable population, including those who reside in our licensed facilities. By working together, members of the public, state, and local agencies can help stop and prevent the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults within our communities," said Jennie Cunico, ADHS acting director.

Now, it's your turn. Abuse, neglect, or exploitation can occur anywhere, from our homes to our schools, workplaces, and healthcare facilities, and online. The impact of these behaviors goes beyond physical and mental well-being; it affects our ability to build healthy relationships and live fulfilling lives. If we suspect someone in our community is being victimized, it's our responsibility to report it promptly. Taking swift action can protect the individual and prevent further harm. With your help, we can create a safer home for the people of Arizona.

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