

Clarence H. Carter, Director

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DES Adult Protective Services Recognizes Importance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day as Reports of Adult Abuse Rise

Community Awareness, Engagement is Key

PHOENIX – Today is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and new information from the Arizona Department of Economic Service’s Division of Aging and Adult Services shows a significant increase in the number of investigations of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation across the state. Most experts agree that elder abuse is underreported, and the Department believes that raising awareness throughout Arizona communities will result in more citizens reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation.

“At DES, we take all reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults very seriously,” said Director Clarence Carter. “No one should have to live in fear for their lives or their money because they don’t have the adequate means to defend themselves.”

Adult Protective Services (APS) reports that during the month of April 2012, staff investigated 729 reports of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation. Since the beginning of the state fiscal year in July 2011, APS investigators have examined a total of 7,396 reports. This represents a 34 percent increase in the total number of cases over the same time last year.

In response to the increase in reports, DES is in the process of adding investigators. Select investigators, who possess an accounting and financial fraud auditing background, will be assigned specifically to investigate exploitation cases to help process exploitation cases statewide. They will also be part of a new APS Financial Exploitation Unit, which should be operational by the end of the summer. Approximately one third of the cases referred to APS include allegations of financial exploitation.

“The abuse of vulnerable adults happens in our society more than we’d like to think and often times, because of their circumstances, it’s hard for victims to report what is happening to them,” adds Carter. “That’s where we need the assistance of the public. If you observe something suspicious with someone you love or even a friend or neighbor, we ask you to please report it so we can do our job to help protect our most vulnerable citizens.”

Reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation can be made on behalf of any vulnerable adult over the age of 18. Reports are anonymous and can be taken over the phone at 1-877-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385) or [online](#) 24 hours a day. The hotline is open from 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. on the weekends.

The Department is also required to maintain the Arizona Adult Abuse Registry. Since the registry law went into effect in 2007, 91 names have been entered into the registry, with 32 names placed on the

registry in the last year. It is available to the public upon written request to the Division of Aging and Adult Services. For more information on Adult Protective Services and the Arizona Adult Abuse Registry, please visit the [DES website](#).

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