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Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor ~ Gladys Carrión, Esq., Commissioner

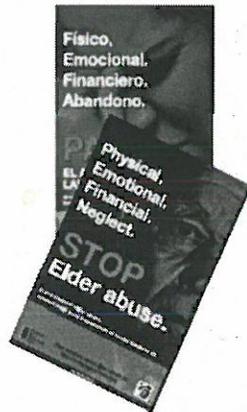
FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Gladys Carrión, Esq.

Office of Children and Family Services



**New “Stop Elder Abuse / Adult Abuse”
Posters to Help Increase Public Awareness of PSA
Role in Investigating Abuse, Neglect and Financial
Exploitation**



I am pleased to advise you that New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) is issuing a series of six posters, in English and Spanish, to inform the public and professionals that suspected Elder Abuse and Adult Abuse should be reported to the local department of social services (LDSS) Protective Services for Adults (PSA) unit. OCFS will provide each district with labels with the intake number for the local PSA unit.

The posters will also contain the address of the OCFS website’s PSA section.

Local districts are currently required under regulations to educate the public, service providers, advocacy groups and other appropriate agencies on an ongoing basis about the role of PSA and how to obtain services for vulnerable adults. These posters are intended to support local districts in their education and outreach efforts. Electronic copies of these posters may be seen at the following link:

<http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/psa/posters.asp>

Bureau of Adult Services staff will be arranging for an initial distribution of posters to districts. Additional copies may be ordered by calling the **Forms and Publications Hotline 518-473-0971** or in writing to **The Resource Distribution Center, 11 Fourth Ave, Rensselaer, NY 12144.**

An Informational Letter will be issued shortly to provide a suggested list for local districts to distribute the posters among their partner agencies within the PSA Delivery Network.

The posters, developed and designed by OCFS and SUNY/PDP, are striking. They depict both elderly persons and young adults and send the message that the public should “stop the abuse” and “make the call” to PSA. There are four posters in English and two in Spanish.

We know that Elder Abuse and Adult Abuse are under-reported. Too many persons are unaware of PSA and its role in investigating and serving these cases. We hope these posters will be an important means of spreading the word.



FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Alan J. Lawitz

Bureau of Adult Services

Referrals, Guardianships, PSA Caseloads Rising

In 2011, PSA Referrals Statewide rose to 38,131. This compares with 36,681 in 2010 and 35,623 in 2009. Referrals have risen both in New York City and the rest of the state. Thirty-two districts recorded higher referral numbers in 2011 than for 2010. The 2011 PSA referral number is an increase of over 52% since 1997 (25,000) and of over 20% since 2005 (30,502). When open and on-going cases are added to the referrals, it is estimated that there are over 60,000 PSA clients statewide. In 2011, the local Commissioner or Commissioner's designee (e.g., contract agencies) served as adult guardian for 1,777 clients. This compares with 1,734 guardianships reported in 2010. It will likely come as no surprise to you that the PSA caseloads have been increasing. We expect that they will continue to increase in the future, as the population ages, as the number of adults with impairments who live in the community increases, and as incidence of abuse, neglect and financial exploitation remains high.

Moving Forward on the IT Front

I am very pleased to advise you that the OCFS Bureau of Adult Services is working closely with our Division of IT to improve our automated case recording and data systems for both the PSA and Family-Type Home for Adults (FTHA) programs. These improvements are expected to:

- transform Adult Services Automation Project (ASAP) to a Web-based application; and
- develop an improved database for FTHAs, including certification, demographic, supervision, inspection, and enforcement information.

Converting ASAP to a Web-based application will make it possible to subsequently make the several other changes and enhanced functionalities to ASAP that have been requested by local districts and by OCFS. Our plan is to revise and automate the FTHA survey checklist to assist local districts in writing inspection reports in a comprehensive and uniform format, and to enhance the ability of local district FTHA coordinators and OCFS to monitor the care provided by operators to residents of these homes. We will have much more information to provide you with on these initiatives in the months to come, but I wanted to share this exciting news with you now.

Planning For World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: June 15, 2012

If you have not done so already, now is a good time to make your plans to organize or participate in an event for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). WEAAD is a great opportunity to focus public attention on Elder Abuse and PSA's role in investigating and preventing abuse. We hope you will use the new OCFS-designed posters discussed in our Commissioner's article, as well as the public service announcements on elder abuse on our OCFS PSA website. In addition, the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) website, <http://www.ncea.aoa.gov> has a wealth of information to assist you, from Elder Abuse Awareness kits, including fact sheets, to public service announcements and more. You can also contact your Bureau of Adult Services representative for assistance. Please let us know of your WEAAD events; we may be able to include photos of such events in future newsletters.

Successful PSA Interventions

Finally, in this issue we are launching an ongoing series of articles from local district PSA units to share stories of successful PSA casework and/or legal interventions to protect their clients. Please consider sending us your stories – whether using casework engagement/collaboration skills, involuntary interventions such as a STIPSO, Mental Hygiene Law interventions, temporary guardianship, success in a POA financial exploitation case, or otherwise, so we can share the good work your district is doing not only with your colleagues across the state, but with a broader readership as well.

Happy Spring! Alan

Successful PSA Interventions:

St. Lawrence PSA Obtains Temporary Guardianship to Protect Client at Risk

By Lisl Maloney

Thanks to St. Lawrence DSS PSA Supervisor Pat Hand, who brought to our attention the following case:

The client is a 50-year-old quadriplegic with a developmental disability who receives 24-hour home care through the Consumer Directed Program. He also receives case management services through an Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) provider. He relies on his wife to provide much of his personal care, as well as coordination of personal care aides. Unfortunately, his wife was involved in a car accident, and had been admitted to a nursing home for recovery and rehabilitation. As a result of her not being able to provide or coordinate the client's personal care, there were times when the client was at home alone with no one available to assist.

One time, although a neighbor was staying with him through the night, the client slipped from his chair. The neighbor could not get the client back to his chair and emergency responders had to be called to assist. The client refused transportation to the hospital at that time.

The PSA caseworker attempted to convince the client that due to frequent gaps in home care services, he should be placed temporarily in a nursing home to ensure his safety. The client adamantly and repeatedly refused to cooperate with this plan. However, PSA was concerned that his health and safety were endangered without someone else available to assist the client.

The county then filed for temporary guardianship of the client and the court granted this request within four business days. A nursing home placement could not be secured immediately at the time the order was signed, so the client was taken to a local emergency room by ambulance. Placement for the client was eventually made at the same nursing home that his wife was still in. The plan is for the client to be at the nursing home only on a temporary basis, and for his wife to resume care of her husband once she is fully recovered from her injuries.



Successful PSA Casework Interventions:

Bronx Caseworker "Engineers" Complex Multi-agency Plan to Protect Client

By Isaac Monserrate, LMSW, Director, Bronx Borough Office, APS, HRA

This case illustrates the endeavors, strengths, and commitment of APS caseworkers and the complexities of cases that APS receives, which in many instances requires the collaboration of numerous agencies to achieve a positive outcome consistent with our purpose to always act "in the Best Interest of the Client."

Case Scenario:

Extremely obese 800-pound young man, complex clinical case dynamics and the coordination of a multi-city agency response (NYFD, NYPD, EMS and NYCHA Social Services and NYCHA Management) to save the life of the young man called Client X. Client X had not been able to venture out of his apartment in four years, he was non-ambulatory and bed-ridden; Client X had to be extracted from his apartment and safely transported to a medical facility which required the participation of seven agencies consisting of first responders, structural architects and medical staff.

- APS caseworker Yelena Ivanova, received the case. She immediately arranged for a medical triage team to determine the client's medical status. Fortunately, Client X's, vital stats were found to be stable, but it was recommended that he had to be in a hospital to conduct an appropriate and thorough medical workup. Ms. Ivanova commenced to contact numerous specialized facilities to secure a placement for Client X. She continued to counsel the client, making sure that he did not become discouraged or lose the motivation to aggressively take control of his circumstances and proceed with the extraction from the premises and placement. After repeated telephone case conferences and some negotiations, Ms. Ivanova was able to secure a hospitalization at a local hospital for the purpose of weight reduction so that the client could be subsequently transferred to a long-term specialized bariatric facility.
- Once the placement slot was secured, Ms. Ivanova coordinated the numerous city agencies needed to safely plan the extraction of the client from the NYCHA apartment on the seventh floor. The NYFD, EMS, NYPD and NYCH designed an extraction plan that required the demolition of several apartment walls, calibration of the elevator to hold the client's weight, specialized gurney and several first responders, and having the appropriate ambulance suited for this extraction and transport.
- On the date of the extraction, Ms. Ivanova and the other agencies met and reviewed the plan. She conducted a quick in-service with the first responders, focusing on the vulnerability and fragile state the client was in and reminding them that the extraction had to take place in a manner that gave the client respect and dignity.

All agencies responded to this case with the utmost professionalism and sensitivity. During the actual extraction all parties present were supportive and expressed encouragement to the client. The extraction and transport was a success and the client was admitted to a local hospital where he lost the needed weight to be transferred to a bariatric facility.

To date, the client is still at the facility and at the last report was 400 lbs and going strong.

(Editor's Note: Ms. Ivanova was presented a NYC HRA APS Commissioner's Award for her great work on this difficult case. Congratulations to her and to Bronx APS!)

MORE CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION



Darrel Dirr, proprietor of art, antique and estate sale businesses, holds a Certificate of Recognition, with Orange County DSS PSA staff, left to right, Tim Murphy, Irene Kurlander and Kate LaBuda. (12/11)

Mr. Dirr was nominated by OCDSS for being 20 years a valuable community partner of PSA, always treating PSA clients with kindness and respect. Services have included: heavy duty cleanups of client dwellings impacted negatively by behaviors of neglect and hoarding; appraisals of client properties and items of potential value and arranging for onsite and online sales of client property, with the proceeds going to the client in support of the client's financial security.



Certificate of Recognition awarded to June Molof, Director, Rockland County Office for the Aging, accompanied by RCDSS Deputy Commissioner PSA Supervisor John Fella, Alan Lawitz and RCDSS Commissioner Susan Sherwood. (1/24/12)



Mike Cahill presents Certificate of Recognition to Cynthia Tarbell, Director of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Office for the Aging (OFA), accompanied by OFA staff, Jeffery Whelan, Commissioner of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe DSS, DSS PSA staff and Stacy Skidders, Sub-Chief. (2/22/12)



Columbia County Social Services agency honored for its work

State bestows praise upon members of county's Human Services and Crisis Intervention Team

By Jeff Alexander

Hudson-Catskill Newspapers

HUDSON - The Columbia County Department of Human Services and the Assessment and Crisis Team were awarded a certificate of recognition by New York State's Office of Children and Family Services on Friday morning. Alan J. Lawitz, Director of New York State's Bureau of Adult Services, praised Columbia County for being a valued partner in the agency's Protective Services for Adults Delivery Network. "This certificate really publicizes the difficult and unsung work people do to protect vulnerable adults. The state very much appreciates your work and having to do more with less in this difficult financial market environment," said Lawitz.

As many counties continue to deliver critical services in the face of depleted financial resources, Director of Columbia County Community Services Michael Cole viewed the ceremony as a chance to highlight positive county government actions. "This is an example of county government working efficiently. Our staff are working tirelessly to help the most vulnerable people in our community and to get recognition like this is huge. It doesn't happen often and it's clear our staff makes our clients and families better off," said Cole.

Columbia County Department of Social Services Commissioner Paul Mossman praised his staff for their daily dedication to such a challenging field. "Their jobs are so difficult and just to see them come in every day and put forth the effort that they do is remarkable," he said. Asked what specific criteria the state used to ultimately recognize Columbia County, Lawitz stated collaborative efforts and partnerships led to the decision. "We've seen many unique partnerships and just the willingness of so many people to come together and serve such a vulnerable population. This led to our decision to recognize Columbia County." Cole echoed Mossman's praise, but stated the field of mental health was up against some serious challenges. "Our field's reimbursement structure has drastically changed. There are very few staff activities for the job that are reimbursed. I wish we had more funding for preventative measures because mental health is a treatable thing and it's something that we can talk about," said Cole. He added that stigmas toward mental health still exist and working to conquer them can ultimately benefit communities. "Chances are we all know someone who is suffering. Stigma just perpetuates isolation, which is one of the many mental health symptoms. There are challenges ahead."

DSS staff members Patrice Lyons and Roseanne Aulino said the recognition was a testament to the staff's dedication. "It was an honor to be nominated in the first place, but really amazing to get formally recognized," said Aulino. She added that the field is comprised of dedicated workers. "It takes a lot of effort and teamwork. We really try to help make a difference in people's lives," Aulino said. Mossman said he believed another challenge the field faces is proving its true value to the community. "Vulnerable adults want to stay in the community and we want to help them do so. I think the challenge for us is showing people that community-based services are cost-effective. The key to doing this is commitment and partnerships. Funding streams go away, but that doesn't mean the need goes away."





Certificate of Recognition presented by OCFS to the Assessment and Crisis Team, Columbia County, Department of Human Resources, accompanied by Paul Mossman, Commissioner, Columbia County DSS, and PSA staff (12/2/11)

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PREVENTING ELDER SCAMS AND ABUSE

By Lisa Harris-Eglin, Esq., Director

James Dees, Outreach Coordinator

NYS Department of State, Division of Consumer Protection

The senior community is often the target of fraudulent businesses and individuals looking to take advantage of their goodwill and vulnerability. Telemarketing fraud, home improvement scams, and identity theft are three of the most common scams affecting seniors. Here are some tips to help avoid becoming a victim.

Telemarketing Fraud:

AARP has found that 56% of people called by telemarketers are aged 50-or-older. Scams can range from callers announcing a prize or sweepstakes, offering a once in a lifetime travel package deal or asking for donations from a charity. Most likely, these offers are not legitimate. Be especially wary of the following telemarketing sales pitches:

- “You have won a lottery, but in order to claim the money, you must send a payment to pay the taxes on the money you have won.”
- “We can give you a great home loan at a great price, regardless of your credit.”
- “We’re offering you a fantastic buy on your favorite magazines; this the last day and we must receive your money by midnight to guarantee this offer.”

Tips to avoid becoming a victim:

DO:

Register your home and personal cellular telephone numbers on the **Do Not Call Registry** by calling **1-888-382-1222** from the phone you wish to register.

- Ask telemarketers for their company’s name, telephone number and address.
- Ask the caller to send you written material to study before you make a purchase.

Research the offer and get advice from family and friends before making a purchase or providing any of your personally identifiable information.

DO NOT:

- Pay for any prize (including the “taxes”) or send money to improve your chances to win a prize.
- Give any caller your credit card number or any other form of personal identification.

Home Improvement Scams:

Home improvement scams are often committed by contractors who will promise to do the work for a very low fee if the consumer agrees to have the work done immediately. When the victim agrees, he or she discovers the fee is much greater than previously discussed; the contractor may never show up; or the work was done using inferior materials.

Tips to Protect Yourself:**DO:**

- Be suspicious if someone comes to your door or calls you with an offer about a home improvement project.
- Obtain the contractor’s license (if a license is required in your city or county) by contacting your city or county licensing office or the Better Business Bureau.
- Get other bids from established businesses; if the deal is too good to be true, it may very well be a scam.

Ask for proof of insurance coverage (e.g. workers compensation, property, liability).

DO NOT:

- Rush. You should decline any home improvement offer that is good “for today only.” Allow work to be done without a written contract that, among other considerations, specifies materials used, a completion date, and a fair payment schedule that pays for work as it is completed.

Identity Theft:

Identity theft continues to rank as the top fraud complaint affecting approximately 10 million Americans each year. Every personal identifier including your name, address, telephone number, Social Security number, and financial account numbers are keys which can allow someone to access your credit, your money, and your identity.

Tips to Protect Yourself:

- Purchase a locked mailbox.
- Challenge requests for your Social Security number. Ask why it is needed, what it will be used for, how it will be stored, and who will have access to it.
- Dispose of papers with personal information via an electronic shredder.

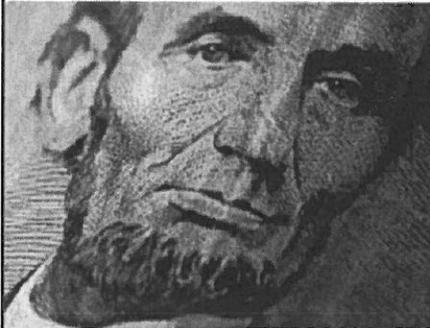
Never give out any personal information including your Social Security number unless you have initiated the contact and you are familiar with the institution you have contacted.

Advocating for and Educating Consumers

The New York State Department of State, Division of Consumer Protection (DCP) is committed to informing, educating and protecting consumers from scams and abuse in the marketplace. For information or to file a complaint call our toll-free helpline at 1-800-697-1220 or visit www.dos.ny.gov/consumerprotection .



THE 19TH ANNUAL NEW YORK STATE ADULT ABUSE TRAINING INSTITUTE



BROKEN TRUST:

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AND RESPOND
TO FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

OCTOBER 2-4, 2012 | Marriott Hotel and Conference
Center in Albany, NY

The Adult Abuse Training Institute (AATI) presented by the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging on behalf of the NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS), brings together over 400 participants from a variety of public and private service providers where networking and sharing expertise will be facilitated through an assortment of formal and informal activities. This year, the focus of the AATI will be Financial Exploitation. We will bring together the perspectives of social services workers, law enforcement, attorneys, bank staff and others to find a common voice in recognizing and responding to this issue.

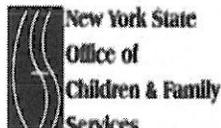
October 2: Financial Exploitation Summit
October 3 & 4: Adult Abuse Training Institute

Who attends these events?

Protective Services for Adults staff; EISEP case workers; attorneys; law enforcement officers; nurses; physicians and other healthcare professionals; social workers in the fields of aging, health, mental health, housing, domestic violence intervention, legal, law enforcement and justice. The commitment and energy of participants and presenters is the most critical element in the success of these annual events.

The Goals for the AATI are always:

- To **build** networks, collaboration, skill and knowledge of professionals working with vulnerable adults;
- To **promote** the exchange of information, innovative thinking and best practices to improve the provision of services to protect and nurture vulnerable adults;
- To **nurture** and sustain all those folks who are engaged in the effort to prevent and/or end abuse to adults in New York State.



BROOKDALE CENTER
for Healthy Aging

Marshall College / The City University of New York

SAVE THE DATE

