

NEWS

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Elder abuse is widespread. Every year an estimated 1 in 10 older Americans are victims of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and that's only part of the picture. Experts believe that elder abuse is significantly under-reported, in part because so many of our communities lack the social supports that would make it easier for those who experience abuse to report it. Research suggests that as few as 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse come to the attention of authorities. The National Adult Protective Association reports the following facts on elder abuse:

- Elder abuse is a rampant, largely invisible, expensive, and lethal problem
- Older abuse victims are three times more likely to die than non-victimized older persons
- Elder abuse costs victims, their families, financial institutions, and taxpayers tens of billions of dollars a year
- Older adults and younger adults with disabilities are the only victims of crime and abuse which receive no designated support for protective and other victim services from the U.S. government

Elder abuse refers to intentional or negligent acts by a caregiver or trusted individual that causes harm to an older person. Elder abuse takes on many forms, including: abuse, financial exploitation, exploitation of the person, caretaker neglect, self-neglect, and abuse. Fiscal year 2017-2018, HYDE County Department of Social Services has seen a 14% increase in Adult Protective Services (APS) calls and a 14% increase in cases accepted for an APS evaluation. The significant increase in reports suggests the community at-large is recognizing and reporting concerns of abuse, neglect, or exploitation to keep elders and disabled adults safe.

Across North Carolina, Department of Social Services employees are helping meet the needs of our state's most vulnerable populations. They serve as first responders in cases of abuse and neglect. Hyde County agencies are currently working towards implementing a Dementia Taskforce to be able to better serve the elderly of Hyde County. We believe that this is a wonderful opportunity to bring awareness to the issue of elder abuse in HYDE County and improve outcomes for the most vulnerable adults in our community.

If you suspect an elderly or disabled adult is being abused, neglected or exploited, please call 252-926-4476 to report your concerns.

Let's keep our elders and disabled adults safe!

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