

# **NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**

**600 East Boulevard Avenue – Department 325, Bismarck ND 58505-0250**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day*

## **Coalition Hosts Shred-A-Thons to Help Seniors Prevent ID Theft**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The West Central Vulnerable Adult Coalition is hosting two document shred-a-thon events on Friday, June 15, 2012, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The events will be held at the Bismarck Senior Center, 315 N. 20<sup>th</sup> St. and Mandan Golden Age Services, 301 15<sup>th</sup> St. NW.

“This day is about raising awareness about issues of elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation,” said coalition co-chair Cherry Schmidt, the regional aging services program administrator for the Department of Human Services’ West Central Human Service Center. “Everyone needs to understand the devastating consequences these issues can have on the lives of older adults in North Dakota.”

Staff from the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division and trained coalition partners will meet with seniors to discuss document retention and how to safely shred other papers that, if disposed of casually, may increase the risk of fraud and identity theft.

“Seniors may be reluctant to dispose of any financial documents, and these events will provide them the opportunity to do so with assistance and guidance,” said coalition co-chair Parrell Grossman, director of the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division. “Consumer education is the key to preventing fraud, and I am pleased that the Attorney General is able to partner with the coalition on this important effort.”

The coalition will also sponsor educational events at Touchmark on West Century, 1000 West Century Ave., Bismarck, and Library Square Apartments, 100 First St. NW, in Mandan. Attendees will learn about personal safety, power of attorney health care directives, consumer fraud issues, document shredding guidelines, and financial exploitation.

Coalition partners include representatives from financial institutions, social service providers, legal services, law enforcement, medical and public health providers, veteran’s organizations, and direct service providers.

The coalition was created in 2009 under the leadership of the N.D. Department of Human Services’ West Central Human Service Center with grant funding from the National Center on Elder Abuse. In addition to current initiatives underway in Bismarck-Mandan, coalition members who reside or work in Burleigh, Emmons, Grant, Kidder, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, Sheridan, and Sioux counties plan to expand their efforts to the 10-county region.

Schmidt said the coalition works closely with law enforcement and other agencies to address challenging issues facing many vulnerable individuals, has established a speakers bureau, and continues to identify options for vulnerable individuals who may be impacted by abuse or neglect.

For information about the coalition or to report an incidence of elder abuse or neglect, contact Schmidt at 701-328-8787, 1-888-328-2662 or ND Relay TTY 1-800-366-6888. For information about preventing identity theft, contact the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division at 701-328-3404 or 1-800-472-2600.

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