

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505**

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Online training offered on how to report abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of older adults and adults with disabilities

BISMARCK, N.D. – Social workers, medical professionals, law enforcement officers, family members, and others who would like to learn how to spot and report elder abuse, neglect, financial exploitation, and self-neglect can now use an online information and training site hosted by the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division at <https://www.cnd.nd.gov/STLPCatalog/325/PUBLICCOURSESPOSTEDONWEBSITES/Mandat edRepVAPSH/story.html>.

“Reporting isn’t difficult, but the online training provides additional information and walks people through the reporting options,” said program administrator Michelle Gayette. “Some people are required by law to report suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults, and many of these professionals can obtain continuing education credits for completing the online training.”

Gayette said the training provides a basic understanding of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation, as well as explaining the role that Vulnerable Adult Protective Services providers have in investigating and addressing concerns.

People who take the free training, she said, will learn what is an appropriate referral and what information should be included in a report.

“It is very important to provide as much information as possible about the vulnerable adult, the nature of the concerns, and dates and locations of any specific incidents,” Gayette said.

She also stressed that if an older adult or vulnerable adult is at imminent risk of serious injury or death, concerned individuals need to call law enforcement at 9-1-1, and afterwards, the individual should also make a report to a vulnerable adult protective services provider.

In North Dakota, vulnerable adult protective services are provided by North Dakota Department of Human Services employees and by these organizations the department contracts with to provide the service: Mountrail County Social Services, Cass County Social Services, and Hart Counseling. Information about the entities serving specific state regions is included in the training and is online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/reporting.html.

People can report suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable adults online at <https://fw2.harmonyis.net/NDLiveIntake/>, by calling the provider in their region, or by completing and submitting by mail, fax, or email the report form SFN 1607, which is online at www.nd.gov/eforms/Doc/sfn01607.pdf, or by calling the Aging and Disability Resource LINK at 1-855-Go2LINK (855-462-5465).

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The North Dakota Department of Human Services receives about 400 reports per quarter. After a report is received, providers gather information to determine if they can make appropriate referrals. Follow-up may include an onsite visit with the person who may be experiencing abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation, or who may be neglecting himself or herself.

“Our goal is to keep people safe and reduce the risk of harm, self-harm, or financial exploitation,” Gayette said.

She said vulnerable adults who are able to make their own decisions, do have the right to refuse services.

To learn more about efforts to prevent and address vulnerable adult abuse and neglect, complete the training or review information on the department’s website at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/reporting.html.

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