

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 11, 2019

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event is June 20 in Bismarck
Speakers will talk about how to recognize and react to financial scams and abuse

BISMARCK, N.D. – Elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation happens – even in North Dakota. To help raise awareness and encourage people to say something if they see something, Gov. Doug Burgum has proclaimed June 15 Elder Abuse Awareness Day in North Dakota.

On June 20, representatives from the West Central Vulnerable Adults Coalition are hosting an event, 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. at Crescent Manor in Bismarck. The purpose of the event is to share information about how to recognize and respond to scams and concerns about possible abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Speakers will also offer tips on health and well-being. Crescent Manor, located at 107 E. Bowen Ave., offers affordable housing for qualifying individuals age 55 and older and is managed by the Burleigh County Housing Authority.

North Dakota Department of Human Services officials said, the state’s mandatory reporting law is helping North Dakota take action to protect vulnerable adults. In Federal Fiscal Year 2018, Human Services received 2,285 reports of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults – an 18 percent increase from the 1,922 reports in 2017.

Tonya Hetzler of the North Dakota Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division will speak at the event about avoiding scams, and Health Maintenance Coordinator Jodi Wolf of Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health will discuss safely managing medications. Aging Services Division representative Sara Steffan will talk about how to report possible elder abuse. Other coalition members will have information available; participants can also register for door prizes.

“About one in three North Dakotans age 65 and older live alone. This puts them at greater risk for social isolation, self-neglect, abuse and exploitation,” said Bill Willis of the Aging Services Division. “Those involved can be total strangers or trusted individuals, including family members. We invite people to come learn about services, which can improve their quality of life and help prevent and address abuse, neglect and exploitation.”

To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults in North Dakota, call toll-free 855-462-5465 or report online at www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/reporting.html. If someone is in immediate danger and needs emergency services, call 911.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Event – page 2

The governor's World Elder Abuse Awareness Day proclamation can be viewed online at www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/aging/proclamation-elder-abuse-awareness-day.pdf.

Agencies attending the event include the North Dakota Securities Department, which will have a document shredder available; Good Samaritan Home Care; AARP; Senior Medicare Patrol; Legal Services of North Dakota; Retired Senior Volunteer Program; the Abused Adult Resource Center; Alzheimer's Association; and Guardian and Protective Services.

The West Central Vulnerable Adult Coalition is co-chaired by representatives from the North Dakota Department of Human Services and the North Dakota Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division. It was created in 2009 under the leadership of the department's West Central Human Service Center with grant funding from the National Center on Elder Abuse. The coalition works with law enforcement and other partners to prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults by providing a coordinated community response.

Vulnerable adult protective services are available statewide through the Department of Human Services' Aging Service Division and local contracted partner agencies. For more information, visit www.nd.gov/dhs/services/adultsaging/vulnerable.html.

###

CONTACT:

Heather Steffl | 701-328-4933
hsteffl@nd.gov

LuWanna Lawrence | 701-328-1892
lklawrence@nd.gov