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Adult Protective Services



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A Message from the Prosecuting Attorney:

The abuse, exploitation and neglect of our elderly is a disgrace. As the average age of our population continues to rise, the "dirty little secret" of elder abuse has quietly become a national epidemic. There are almost one million people in Indiana aged 65 and over, and that number is growing. Each year, more than 40,000 cases of elder abuse and neglect occur in Indiana, and it is estimated that only 1 in 14 cases are reported. It is the responsibility of the State, the judicial system, law enforcement, health care providers, social service agencies, and our communities to protect the health and welfare of this vulnerable group.

Elder abuse happens everywhere; in poor, middle class, and upper income households; in cities, suburbs, and rural areas. It is a problem that has no demographic boundaries.

It is estimated that 80% of the care provided for the elderly is given by family members. Ironically, the abuser is often a family member who takes on the responsibility of care with the best of intentions, but due to the inevitable financial or emotional stress of the situation, loses control. National studies show that before the first abusive act, the caregiver typically has been caring for the elderly for 9 years, often with very little recognition or help. Sadly, because elderly victims of abuse live with and are dependent upon their abusers, they often suffer in silence. They may be reluctant to seek help because they fear loss of family ties or independence, or they may simply not know about the services available to them through Adult Protective Services.

All senior citizens, caretakers, and children who have aging parents, must be aware of the help that is available as well as the options they have.

In 1985, Adult Protective Services Units were established throughout Indiana to investigate reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and to assist in obtaining protective services for endangered adults. An "endangered adult" is defined by Indiana statute as any individual over 18 years of age, who is incapable by reason of mental infirmity or other incapacity of either caring for themselves or managing their property, and is harmed or threatened with harm as a result of neglect, battery, or exploitation.

Indiana Adult Protective Services, under the umbrella of the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA), provides an Investigator for each of 15 Units around

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the state. Unit 14 includes Clark, Floyd, Harrison, and Scott Counties, with Clark County serving as the "hub" county. The Investigator assigned to Unit 14 is Patricia Martin. Her office is located in the Office of the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney in the West Wing of the County Government Building, located at 501 East Court Avenue, Jeffersonville, IN 47130. FSSA has advised that Indiana's Adult Protective Services program offers unique advantages in its association with Prosecuting Attorneys and the criminal justice system, and is the only elder abuse program in the country not run from a state level social service agency.

Unfortunately, very little funding has been made available to this very important agency. It is our hope that the Indiana Legislature will see fit to dramatically increase the resources and manpower of Investigators who have for too long been "overworked and underpaid." In any event, the Clark County Prosecuting Attorney will continue to supplement the budget needs of Unit 14 because of the essential services provided to the victims of elder abuse in Clark County.

Abuse of the elderly cannot be considered someone else's problem. By "minding our own business," the elderly will continue to suffer. We must all play a part. Growing old should not mean that we will become victims of abuse. Please report elder abuse. The Elder Abuse Hotline is: 1-800-992-6978.

Abuse and neglect seldom happen overnight, it happens over time. Unless we take the time to notice, it will continue, and unless we take the time to get involved, it will get worse.

Available to you in the Clark County Prosecutor's Office are two Adult Protective Service Investigators, victim assistance counselors trained in elderly investigations, and a staff of Deputy Prosecuting Attorneys, all highly qualified with a wealth of experience working with those who have had the unfortunate experience of becoming a victim.

Please do not hesitate to call us at 812-285-6364. Our office stands ready to assist you in any way, whether it be an answer to a question, investigating a potentially abused relative, friend or neighbor, or assisting you, should you become a victim.

[Jeremy Mull](#)
Prosecuting Attorney

[Patricia Martin](#)
APS Investigator

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