

Wolf Administration Launches New Online Training for Mandatory Reporting of Elder Abuse to Mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Harrisburg, PA -- In response to and in recognition of Governor Wolf's Executive Order on Vulnerable Populations, the Pennsylvania Department of Aging has created a free, online Mandatory Abuse Reporting training module to help aging and human services providers recognize and report elder abuse.

The training is being publicly launched on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD), which is commemorated on June 15 each year. WEAAD is an opportunity for people and organizations to take action to protect older adults by raising awareness about elder abuse, why it occurs, and what can be done to stop it.

"The Wolf Administration is committed to empowering individuals to take action to end elder abuse on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and every day," said Pennsylvania Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. "We're marking this important day by launching a new training tool to empower those who work with older adults to recognize the signs of elder abuse, understand their reporting responsibilities, and take action."

The training will be available, but not limited, to providers, employees and administrators of long-term care facilities; personal care homes, home health care agencies; adult day centers, domiciliary care residences and collaborative partners. Although the training is intended for mandated reporters, anyone who is interested in protecting older adults from abuse can take the training. The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) leadership provided input and feedback on the module's content and design.

"Mandated reporters play a critical role in keeping vulnerable Pennsylvanians safe, and we must equip them with the tools they need to carry out this duty effectively," said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. "I hope this training will be a valuable resource that empowers mandated reporters around Pennsylvania to speak up when necessary and keep they people they serve safe from abuse and neglect."

The module was developed to reach a broad audience from entry-level to seasoned professionals. The training takes about 30 minutes to complete and includes knowledge checks throughout to ensure that participants understand the information. A printable certificate recognizing the successful completion of the training module is available. This training module will also help to ensure that facilities are compliant with licensure requirements.

The training is available on the PDA Learning Management System (LMS).

The following are relevant facts about elder abuse and its investigation in Pennsylvania, as reported by the Department of Aging's Protective Services Office:

- The total number of reports of alleged abuse received by the AAAs during fiscal year 2018 -19 was 49,909, a 12% increase from fiscal year 2017-18.

- The most frequent alleged/reported type of abuse was caregiver neglect (29.7%) followed by exploitation (27.1%). The most frequent substantiated types of abuse were neglect (self-neglect, 38.2% and caregiver neglect, 21.3%) followed by physical abuse (19.2%).
- The age group most reported to be in need of protective services during fiscal year 2018-19 was between the ages of 71 and 80 (32.4%). The majority were Caucasian (79.7%) and female (64%). Many alleged victims resided in their own homes (45%), were widowed (37%), or were living alone (42%). The data also reveals that 42.5% of substantiated perpetrators were between the ages of 30-59 and 54% were female. Of all designated perpetrators, 13% were identified as family members and 7% were identified as a female caretaker.

Sec. Torres also noted that the Older Adult Protective Services Program continues to protect older adults through the COVID-19 pandemic. Anyone suspecting elder abuse should call the statewide reporting hotline at 1-800-490-8505 , which operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.