235B.3 Dependent adult abuse reports.

1. *a.* (1) The department shall receive dependent adult abuse reports and shall collect, maintain, and disseminate the reports by establishing a central registry for dependent adult abuse information. The department shall evaluate the reports expeditiously.

(2) However, the department of inspections and appeals is solely responsible for the evaluation and disposition of dependent adult abuse cases within facilities and programs pursuant to chapter 235E and shall inform the department of human services of such evaluations and dispositions pursuant to section 235E.2.

(3) If, in the course of an assessment or evaluation of a report of dependent adult abuse, the department of human services or the department of inspections and appeals determines the case involves wages, workplace safety, or other labor and employment matters under the jurisdiction of the division of labor services of the department of workforce development, the relevant portions of the case shall be referred to the division.

(4) If, in the course of an assessment or evaluation of a report of dependent adult abuse, the department of human services or the department of inspections and appeals determines that the case involves discrimination under the jurisdiction of the civil rights commission, the relevant portions of the case shall be referred to the commission.

b. Reports of dependent adult abuse which is the result of the acts or omissions of the dependent adult shall be collected and maintained in the files of the dependent adult as assessments only and shall not be included in the central registry.

c. A report of dependent adult abuse that meets the definition of dependent adult abuse under section 235B.2, subsection 5, paragraph *"a"*, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a) or (d), or section 235B.2, subsection 5, paragraph *"a"*, subparagraph (4), which the department determines is minor, isolated, and unlikely to reoccur shall be collected and maintained by the department as an assessment only for a five-year period and shall not be included in the central registry and shall not be considered to be founded dependent adult abuse. However, a subsequent report of dependent adult abuse that meets the definition of dependent adult abuse under section 235B.2, subsection 5, paragraph *"a"*, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (a) or (d), or section 235B.2, subsection 5, paragraph *"a"*, subparagraph (4), that occurs within the five-year period and that is committed by the caretaker responsible for the act or omission which was the subject of the previous report of dependent adult abuse which the department determined was minor, isolated, and unlikely to reoccur shall not be considered minor, isolated, and unlikely to reoccur.

2. A person who, in the course of employment, examines, attends, counsels, or treats a dependent adult and reasonably believes the dependent adult has suffered abuse, shall report the suspected dependent adult abuse to the department. Persons required to report include all of the following:

a. A member of the staff of a community mental health center.

b. A peace officer.

c. An in-home homemaker-home health aide.

d. An individual employed as an outreach person.

e. A health practitioner, as defined in section 232.68.

f. A member of the staff or an employee of a supported community living service, sheltered workshop, or work activity center.

g. A social worker.

h. A certified psychologist.

3. *a.* If a staff member or employee is required to report pursuant to this section, the person shall immediately notify the department and shall also immediately notify the person in charge or the person's designated agent.

b. The employer or supervisor of a person who is required to or may make a report pursuant to this section shall not apply a policy, work rule, or other requirement that interferes with the person making a report of dependent adult abuse or that results in the failure of another person to make the report.

4. An employee of a financial institution may report suspected financial exploitation of a dependent adult to the department.

5. Any other person who believes that a dependent adult has suffered abuse may report the suspected abuse to the department of human services.

6. Following the reporting of suspected dependent adult abuse, the department of human services or an agency approved by the department shall complete an assessment of necessary services and shall make appropriate referrals for receipt of these services. The assessment shall include interviews with the dependent adult, and, if appropriate, with the alleged perpetrator of the dependent adult abuse and with any person believed to have knowledge of the circumstances of the case. The department may provide necessary protective services and may establish a sliding fee schedule for those persons able to pay a portion of the protective services.

7. Upon a showing of probable cause that a dependent adult has been abused, a court may authorize a person, also authorized by the department, to make an evaluation, to enter the residence of, and to examine the dependent adult. Upon a showing of probable cause that a dependent adult has been financially exploited, a court may authorize a person, also authorized by the department, to make an evaluation, and to gain access to the financial records of the dependent adult.

8. If the department determines that disclosure is necessary for the protection of a dependent adult, the department may disclose to a subject of a dependent adult abuse report referred to in section 235B.6, subsection 2, paragraph *"a"*, that an individual is listed in the child or dependent adult abuse registry or is required to register with the sex offender registry in accordance with chapter 692A.

9. The department shall inform the appropriate county attorneys of any reports of dependent adult abuse. The department may request information from any person believed to have knowledge of a case of dependent adult abuse. The person, including but not limited to a county attorney, a law enforcement agency, a multidisciplinary team, a social services agency in the state, or any person who is required pursuant to subsection 2 to report dependent adult abuse, whether or not the person made the specific dependent adult abuse report, shall cooperate and assist in the evaluation upon the request of the department. If the department's assessment reveals that dependent adult abuse exists which might constitute a criminal offense, a report shall be made to the appropriate law enforcement agency. County attorneys and appropriate law enforcement agencies shall also take any other lawful action necessary or advisable for the protection of the dependent adult.

a. If, upon completion of the evaluation or upon referral from the department of inspections and appeals, the department determines that the best interests of the dependent adult require court action, the department shall initiate action for the appointment of a guardian or conservator or for admission or commitment to an appropriate institution or facility pursuant to the applicable procedures under chapter 125, 222, 229, or 633, or shall pursue other remedies provided by law. The appropriate county attorney shall assist the department in the preparation of the necessary papers to initiate the action and shall appear and represent the department at all district court proceedings.

b. The department shall assist the court during all stages of court proceedings involving a suspected case of dependent adult abuse.

c. In every case involving abuse which is substantiated by the department and which results in a judicial proceeding on behalf of the dependent adult, legal counsel shall be appointed by the court to represent the dependent adult in the proceedings. The court may also appoint a guardian ad litem to represent the dependent adult if necessary to protect the dependent adult's best interests. The same attorney may be appointed to serve both as legal counsel and as guardian ad litem. Before legal counsel or a guardian ad litem is appointed pursuant to this section, the court shall require the dependent adult and any person legally responsible for the support of the dependent adult to complete under oath a detailed financial statement. If, on the basis of that financial statement, the court deems that the dependent adult or the legally responsible person is able to bear all or a portion of the cost of the legal counsel or guardian ad litem, the court shall so order. In cases where the dependent adult or the legally responsible person is unable to bear the cost of the legal counsel or guardian ad litem, the expense shall be paid by the county.

10. A person participating in good faith in reporting or cooperating with or assisting the

department in evaluating a case of dependent adult abuse has immunity from liability, civil or criminal, which might otherwise be incurred or imposed based upon the act of making the report or giving the assistance. The person has the same immunity with respect to participating in good faith in a judicial proceeding resulting from the report or cooperation or assistance or relating to the subject matter of the report, cooperation, or assistance.

11. It shall be unlawful for any person or employer to discharge, suspend, or otherwise discipline a person required to report or voluntarily reporting an instance of suspected dependent adult abuse pursuant to subsection 2 or 5, or cooperating with, or assisting the department of human services in evaluating a case of dependent adult abuse, or participating in judicial proceedings relating to the reporting or cooperation or assistance based solely upon the person's reporting or assistance relative to the instance of dependent adult abuse. A person or employer found in violation of this subsection is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

12. A person required by this section to report a suspected case of dependent adult abuse who knowingly and willfully fails to do so commits a simple misdemeanor. A person required by this section to report a suspected case of dependent adult abuse who knowingly fails to do so or who knowingly, in violation of subsection 3, interferes with the making of such a report or applies a requirement that results in such a failure is civilly liable for the damages proximately caused by the failure.

13. The department of inspections and appeals shall adopt rules which require facilities or programs to separate an alleged dependent adult abuser from a victim following an allegation of perpetration of abuse and prior to the completion of an investigation of the allegation.

91 Acts, ch 231, §3; 92 Acts, ch 1143, §8, 9; 93 Acts, ch 72, §6; 95 Acts, ch 51, §4; 96 Acts, ch 1130, §3 – 5; 98 Acts, ch 1181, §13; 99 Acts, ch 129, §17; 2001 Acts, ch 122, §7 – 10; 2003 Acts, ch 98, §2; 2003 Acts, ch 123, §2; 2003 Acts, ch 166, §27; 2003 Acts, ch 179, §69; 2004 Acts, ch 1116, §17, 18; 2006 Acts, ch 1030, §27; 2007 Acts, ch 159, §15; 2008 Acts, ch 1093, §4 – 6; 2009 Acts, ch 41, §263; 2009 Acts, ch 136, §7; 2019 Acts, ch 122, §2

Referred to in §235B.16