

## FAQ's on Elder Abuse Initiative

### **Q: What is the Elder Abuse Initiative?**

A: The Elder Abuse Initiative was developed through a collaborative effort with the Department of Elder Affairs, the Department of Human Services, and the Elder Abuse Committee. This initiative's foundation is a holistic system for individuals 60+ who are experiencing or susceptible to experiencing some form of abuse or exploitation. The following components are cornerstones in this system:

- The prevention, detection, reporting and intervention of abuse and exploitation;
- Individuals who do not meet the criteria for Dependent Adult Abuse;
- Individual who do meet the criteria for Dependent Adult Abuse;
- Accurate reporting of elder abuse incidents. It is estimated that only 20% are reported;
- Individuals who potentially could be exposed to some form of abuse and/or exploitation; and
- Training of law enforcement, county attorneys, physicians, health care providers and the general public.

### **Q: Is there a difference between elder abuse and dependent adult abuse?**

A: Yes. This initiative supports any individual 60+ who is a victim or potential victim of abuse or exploitation. Elder abuse involves an individual 60+ who experiences any type of abuse or exploitation. The perpetrator does not have to be the caregiver nor does the victim have to be deemed dependent. Iowa does not have an elder abuse law but does have a dependent adult abuse law. In order for a dependent adult abuse referral to be made, the following three criteria must be met:

1. There must be a dependent adult. A dependent adult is anyone over the age of 18 who is dependent due to mental or physical challenge.
2. There must be a caretaker or the dependent adult is responsible for self-denial of critical care. The caretaker responsibility may be assumed voluntarily, by employment or by order of the court.
3. There must be an allegation recognized by the Code of Iowa as abuse:
  - Physical Abuse, Including Assault
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Denial of Critical Care
  - Self-denial of Critical Care
  - Financial Exploitation
  - Sexual Exploitation

### **Q: Does this mean the efforts to change the existing Dependent Adult Abuse Law have ceased?**

A: No. These efforts have been occurring for several years and will continue to be pursued.

**Q: How does this initiative differ from CMPFE?**

A: This initiative compliments the Case Management Program for the Frail Elderly (CMPFE) and staff will be collaborating with case managers in this initiative. It is important to note that not all CMPFE clients will need assistance from this initiative and not all victims/potential victims will need to utilize the CMPFE program. The Elder Abuse Initiative will help identify persons in need of assistance. The type of assistance identified may very well include services available through the case management system or other non-CMPFE services such as abuse counseling, legal counseling, removing the alleged abuser from the home, etc.

**Q: Why are only certain areas of the state benefiting from this initiative?**

A: Due to resource limitations the Regional Prevention Coordinators were placed in areas with the greatest statistical need. However, the State Elder Abuse Prevention Coordinator will handle calls received from outside the designated regions.