

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

PROCLAMATION NO. _____

Proclaiming June 25, 2015 as Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Multnomah County

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Finds:

- a. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day started in 2006 to mark adoption of United Nations International Plan of Action on Aging. The plan recognizes the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.
- b. Elder Abuse is most often defined as any act that harms a senior or jeopardizes his or her health or welfare.
- c. In May 2015 the White House Conference on Aging issued an Elder Abuse Policy Brief which found elder abuse is a serious public health problem affecting millions of older Americans each year, with some studies suggesting that as few as one in 23 cases is reported to authorities.
- d. Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation are very serious issues that cause widespread justice and social problems. It is overwhelmingly perpetrated by the victims' own family members. Victims tend to be older, very frail, and often dependent on their abusers for basic life sustaining care.
- e. Elder abuse is also a serious health issue. According to research, victims of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation have three times the risk of dying prematurely.
- f. Multnomah County's Adult Protective Services handled 6,514 reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation in Fiscal Year 2013-14.
- g. Eliminating abuse of older persons is a key priority for Multnomah County Adult Protective Services. The Interagency Committee for Abuse Prevention (ICAP) - made up of judges, law enforcement, the district attorney's office, Aging and Disability Services employees and others – meets regularly to discuss elder abuse issues.
- h. Multnomah County's Gatekeeper Program assists vulnerable seniors by training individuals who come into contact with seniors during their everyday lives to recognize signs of distress.

- i. The Financial Abuse Specialist Team (F.A.S.T.) investigates allegations of financial exploitation of older and vulnerable adults. The multidisciplinary partnership consists of Adult Protective Services Investigators, a Multnomah County Sheriff's Detective, a dedicated Deputy District Attorney, the Portland Police Bureau's Elder Crimes Unit, and the Department of Justice. Since its inception in 2009 F.A.S.T has worked to fight financial fraud, increase criminal prosecution, and recoup victims' lost assets.
- j. The Public Guardian/Conservator program is an essential part of the county response system for abuse and neglect when legal authority is required to provide for the safety and well-being of incapable adults, including seniors suffering from Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia.
- k. The State of Oregon has also responded to this growing need in recent years. In 2014, Legislature passed Senate Bill 1553 establishing the Oregon Public Guardian Program. The Oregon Department of Justice has proposed an Elder Abuse Prosecutor in this year's budget to assist county district attorney's with elder abuse cases.
- l. Multnomah County remains committed to ensuring all seniors are treated with the respect and dignity that will enable them to continue to serve as leaders, mentors, volunteers, and important and active members of the community.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaims:

- 1. June 25, 2015, as Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Multnomah County. We urge all public agencies, the private sector, advocates and citizens to commit to building safer communities for our elder residents.

ADOPTED this 25 day of June, 2015.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON**

Deborah Kafoury, Chair

REVIEWED:
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By _____
Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

SUBMITTED BY: Commissioner Judy Shiprack, District 3