

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
For MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

PROCLAMATION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

Proclaiming June 15, 2010 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Multnomah County

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners finds:

- a. June 15, 2010, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Initiated in 2006, the day is in support of the United Nations International Plan of Action which recognizes the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. Governments, agencies, educational institutions, professionals in the field of aging, religious groups and many others will promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by organizing on this day to raise awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.
- b. Elder Abuse is most often defined as any act that harms a senior or jeopardizes his or her health or welfare.
- c. The National Elder Abuse Incidence Study (National Center on Elder Abuse, 1998) found that more than 500,000 persons aged 60+ were victims of domestic abuse and that an estimated 84% of incidents are not reported to authorities, denying victims the protection and support they need.
- d. Multnomah County's Adult Protective Services handled 8,400 reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation in Fiscal Year 2008-09.
- e. Elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation are very serious issues that cause widespread justice and social problems. Elder abuse is:
  - Overwhelmingly perpetrated by the victims' own family members;
  - Elder abuse victims tend to be older, very frail and often dependent on their abusers for basic, life sustaining care.
- f. Elder abuse is also a very serious health issue. According to research:
  - Almost 11% of people ages 60 and older, or 5.7 million, reported suffering from some form of abuse within the past year alone;
  - Elder victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation have three times the risk of dying prematurely;
  - Nationally, seniors lose a minimum of \$2.5 billion each year to financial abuse and exploitation. In Multnomah County, the Financial Abuse Specialist Team was able to recoup more than \$1.6 million in money and services for seniors.
- g. Eliminating abuse of older persons has been the goal and mission of the Multnomah

County Adult Protective Services program and it initiated a countywide Interagency Committee for Abuse Prevention (ICAP). The committee – 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 also assists vulnerable seniors and those with disabilities who need help by training people who they come in contact with in their everyday lives to look for signs of distress.
- i. All residents should watch for signs of abuse such as physical trauma, withdrawal, depression, anxiety, fear of family members, friends or caregivers, or financial exploitation.

The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners Proclaim:

June 15, 2010, is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. We urge all public agencies, the private sector, advocates and citizens to commit to building safer communities for our elder residents.

ADOPTED this 3rd day of June, 2010

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

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Jeff Cogen, Chair

Submitted by: Commissioner Judy Shiprack