

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

June 28, 2022

Proclaim June 2022 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month

Older Americans make invaluable contributions to our families, our communities, and to Los Angeles County (County) every day. They deserve the privilege of aging with dignity. Sadly, every year, millions of elderly individuals and dependent adults become victims of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. These victims are our parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, neighbors, and other loved ones. These horrific abuses can take many forms, including physical, verbal, emotional, sexual, negligence, abandonment, isolation, and financial exploitation. Last fiscal year, through the COVID-19 pandemic, the County Department of Workforce Development Aging & Community Services (WDACS), Adult Protective Services program received and responded to over 54,000 referrals of elder and dependent adult abuse.

In order to prevent elder and dependent adult abuse, community awareness and engagement are vital. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of recognizing elder and dependent adult abuse with increased isolation, abuse, neglect, and exploitation all more likely. Due to the public health need for social distancing, outreach has been more challenging, necessitating creative alternatives to traditional, in-person outreach events. As the County continues our collective fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, elder and dependent adults remain some of the most vulnerable residents.

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World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) declared June 15, 2022, as WEAAD, recognizing the significance of elder and dependent abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

In response, WDACS, Aging & Community Services Branch, soon to be the Aging & Disabilities Department, promoted June as *“Building Strong Support for Elders”* month; a campaign designed in partnership with the University of Southern California’s Center for Elder Justice. The campaign included outreach and education at 14 service and senior centers, along with 98 congregate meal sites and at 12 outreach events addressing Elder and Dependent Abuse in the County. Additional outreach was conducted to include all Area Agency on Aging providers, all 88 cities, their respective mayors, banking institutions, law enforcement agencies, America’s Job Center of California and all Aging memorandum of understanding and contract partners. Further outreach was conducted with the Los Angeles Department of Aging, Area Agency on Aging and Purposeful Aging Los Angeles partners and providers. There were also four webinars, of which one was the coordination of the Healthy Brain LA Initiative and Elder Abuse and Dementia Awareness webinar, that was hosted on June 15th in English and on June 16th in Spanish. Lastly, on June 15, 2022, the Los Angeles International Airport pylons were lit up in purple, in recognition of WEAAD.

As we continue along the road to an equitable recovery, we must work to ensure that our older and dependent adults can age safely, with dignity and respect.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Proclaim June 2022 as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month throughout Los Angeles County (County).

2. Commend the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services soon to be the Aging & Disabilities Department, for their commitment to prevent elder and dependent adult abuse in the County through awareness, engagement and action.
3. Encourage all County residents to build strong support for elders by reporting elder and dependent adult abuse by calling 1-800-4R-SENIORS, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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