

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, August 15, 2017

4:30 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.

Members Present: Marian Anderson, Marjorie Ledell, Ali Caley, Donna Roberge, Linda O’Leary, Temple Lentz, Amy Gross, Pat Janik, and Chuck Frayer

Members Absent:

1. Welcome and Call to Order:

Marjorie Ledell opened the meeting.

Approval of Agenda: The agenda was unanimously approved by the commission. The May 16th meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Public Health Advisory Committee Update: No report this month.

3. Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington (AADSWA) update: No report this month.

4. Introduction to Speaker: Vancouver Police Detective Mike Day will speak about the Clark County Elder Justice Center and how to help prevent abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. Elder abuse and neglect is a significant public health and criminal justice issue. Nationally, at least 5 percent of older adults are subjected to abuse, neglect or exploitation each year. Our community’s response to the problem was greatly enhanced when the Clark County Elder Justice Center opened in 2011.

Note:

The Elder Justice Center responds to reports of abuse of elderly citizens and other vulnerable adults in Clark County. The Elder Justice Center was formed to apply the success of an interdisciplinary team approach to preventing, investigating and prosecuting the abuse and neglect of elderly and vulnerable adults. This coordinated approach is modeled after the Children’s Justice Center and has been shown to enhance the effectiveness of intervention, investigation and prosecution, while reducing trauma to victims and their families. This partnership makes the best use of limited resources by sharing case information, which helps the authorities link cases and identify patterns, minimize duplication of effort, and address the root of a problem when abuse is reported.

Detective Mike Day:

- US Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration on Aging
 - 46.2 million persons 65 or older in 2014, which is about 1 in 7 Americans.
 - Older Americans make up 14.5 % of the US population in 2014, and will grow to 21.7% by 2040.

- About 28% of noninstitutionalized older persons live alone (8.8 million women, 3.8 million men).
- Almost half of women age 75+ live alone.
- Older women (25.1 million) outnumbered older men (19.6 million).
- Social Security constituted the majority of older persons income followed by assets, private pensions, government pensions and earnings.

“For every one case reported another twenty-three cases never come to light”

Source: NYS Elder Abuse Prevalence Study; Weill Cornell Medical College, NYC Department for the Aging; Lifespan; (2011)

Victims may not report because of:

- embarrassment
- shame
- love for the suspect
- dependence on the suspect
- denial
- fear

The Elder Justice Center is comprised of:

- Clark County Prosecutor
- Vancouver Police Department Detective
- Three Adult Protection Services (APS) Investigators
- System Based Victim Advocate

The Elder Justice Center receives cases through a criminal report or APS investigation.

- Type of crimes investigated:
 - Attempted homicide
 - Physical abuse 1st, 2nd and 3rd degree
 - Sexual abuse, i.e. rape
 - Confinement crimes, i.e. kidnap
 - Property crimes, i.e., burglary
 - Person crimes, i.e. robbery

Financial Exploitation Crimes Investigated:

- Theft 1st Degree – Loss of \$5,000 or Greater
- Theft 2nd Degree – Loss of \$750-\$5,000
- Unlawful Issuance of Bank Checks (NSF)
- Forgery
- Money Laundering
- Identity Theft
- Improperly Obtaining Financial Information

Definitions:

Vulnerable Adult RCW 74.34.020:

- a. 60 years of age or older who has the functional, mental or physical inability to care for himself or herself; or
- b. Found incapacitated under chapter 11.88 RCW; or

- c. Who has a developmental disability as defined under RCW 71A.10.020; or
- d. Admitted to any facility

Guardianship:

- "...Guardian is an individual appointed by the court to represent the best interests of a child or incapacitated person involved in a case in superior court." (Washington Courts)

Guardian/Guardian-ad-litem:

- May be someone who is a family member/lay person or certified professional guardian.

Vulnerable Adult Protection Order (VAPO):

- Court order is brought on by the vulnerable adult or their guardian/caretaker.
- Court authorizes full protection order for up to five years with provisions of no direct contact or third party contact and to remain specified distance away from the house, work or school or vulnerable adult.
- Violation of the order by the suspect is an automatic arrest with no bail.

Fiduciary: "An individual in whom another has placed the utmost trust and confidence to manage and protect property or money. The relationship wherein one person has an obligation to act for another's benefit." (thefreedictionary.com)

Power of Attorney: A power of attorney (POA) is a written authorization to represent or act on another's behalf in private affairs, business, or some other legal matter, sometimes against the wishes of the other. The person authorizing the other to act is the *principal, grantor, or donor* (of the power). The one authorized to act is the *attorney-in-fact (attorney for short)*. (Wikipedia)

How to Protect Yourself:

- In the senior community, checks are the typical form of financial transactions. Include your name and address on the check. Don't put date of birth or extra information on the check. Use a PO Box instead of a street address if you are concerned about theft. Use initials instead of full name to prevent identity theft on the check. Always fill in and don't leave bank the dollar amount or "pay to the order of". Always sign your name.
- Never give your private information over the phone (e.g., date of birth, social security, full name, maiden name/family information)
- Remove your SSN or unused credit cards from your wallet.
- Always shred and completely dispose of all personal documents/information.
- Protect your PIN (personal identification number) for ATM, stores, etc.

Prevalent Criminal Scams:

- Phone (e.g., fictitious relative requesting money transfer to courthouse, fake sweepstakes)
- Construction (check references, check Labor & Industry website, make sure they are licensed and bonded, don't give full payment upfront)
- Sweetheart (older male victim and younger female suspect)
- Power of Attorney (make sure the wording is clear about financial arrangements)

Resources:

Agencies to contact:

- Equifax and Experian (You should do a free annual credit check to make sure there are no credit cards out in your name)
- Trans Union

- Social Security Administration
- US Postal Inspection Service
- Department of Licensing

Adult Protective Services – dshs.wa.gov
 Senior Resource Alliance – seniorresourcealliance.org
 National Council on Aging – ncoa.org
 YWCA – ywca.org
 Lutheran Community Services – lcsnw.org
 Lifeline Connections – lifelineconnections.org

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day: June 15, 2006: This program was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons.

Questions from the COA members with speaker’s responses:

Where do you get most of your cases from? Adult Protection Services (APS) Investigators or from patrol.

Is there a lot of underreporting? Only one in 23 cases is brought forward. You can’t force a victim to be a victim. We are trying to empower victims and have community partners come together to support victims.

Are you seeing an increase incidence in the number of telephone scams? I personally have not come across that. I am seeing a surge in caregivers stealing from their client. The majority of it has to do with familial relationships between family or friends.

A lot of seniors don’t use cellphones and caller ID. How do you advise seniors not to fall victim to caller scams? I advise them to let it go into voicemail so we can capture the phone number and the scam. If there are multiple calls during the day, they can block the calls. Smart phones have different features to block calls or ID calls.

Did I hear you correctly that the Power of Attorney is not limited and you can put parameters on it? If yes, can you give examples? You can list what is reasonable reimbursement for the holder of the POA.

How easy is it to revoke a POA? As long as the person is competent, they can revoke a POA at any time and have a notary sign it.

Questions from the Public:

Is there a County Sheriff’s officer that works with Elder Justice Center? There is no detective specifically assigned to address elder abuse in the county. Once a case is submitted for prosecution regarding elder abuse, the prosecuting attorney for the Elder Justice Center would handle it.

If we have concerns about a neighbor being victimized by a female predator (sweetheart scam) over the past two years, can we call you? What recourse do I have? A resident or squatter would have to be

evicted through the court system. It depends on how he is cognitively functioning to determine how this could be solved, especially if he does not see this as a problem.

How to verify if contactors are legitimate: You can call the Department of Revenue and Department of Labor & Industries, which will give you information about when the contractor was last bonded, licensed, and insured.

Who protects caretakers against false witness against an elder person's abuse? I have not had any cases that involved this. You can go to a prosecuting attorney's office or to the federal government to seek assistance.

Have you had cases where you prosecute professional guardians? No, I have not.

A member of the public gave a copy of a document about a practicing professional guardian in Clark County who is alleged to have abused an elderly victim.

Are guardians appointed by the court and is there training? Yes, there is training and yes the court can appoint guardianship. I don't know how much training is involved but there is a training program.

Can you recommend a website to run a background check on someone? Unfortunately, I don't know a website that can do this, because I use law enforcement systems.

A member of the audience stated that Washington State does offer a website for background checks that non-profits can use. The person being checked has to agree to have the background check run on them.

5. New Business:

Housing, Transportation, Supportive Services, and Healthy Communities are the four focus areas of the COA. Amy made a motion that the COA focus on transportation in 2018 and Temple seconded. The COA unanimously agreed.

6. Announcements:

There will be an Arts and Culture Summit on Saturday, September 23. This is a volunteer organization that wants to address the arts infrastructure in Clark County. The COA is invited to attend. Donna Roberge and Temple Lentz from the COA are planning to attend.

The COA's next meeting will be on September 19th and the speakers will focus on Mental Health.

Meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm

The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.