



MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS JUNE 15TH ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY *CRIMES AGAINST VULNERABLE ADULTS ON THE RISE IN TENNESSEE*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – More than 9,500 reports of adult abuse, neglect and/or exploitation were made last year to the Tennessee Department of Human Services' Adult Protective Services (APS) unit. The number of individuals receiving services through the APS has increased nearly 40 percent in just six years. And more than eight out of 10 times, the abuser is related to the victim. Governor Phil Bredesen is proclaiming June 15th "Elder Abuse Awareness Day" in Tennessee, and the Tennessee Departments of Commerce and Insurance and Human Services are teaming up to help raise awareness.

"Abuse and neglect of our elderly and vulnerable citizens happens every day," said DHS Commissioner Gina Lodge. "We need to do all we can to make the public aware that this is a crime which, by law, must be reported."

Types of abuse include physical, sexual and emotional. Seniors and vulnerable adults are also at risk of financial exploitation. More than 20,000 complaints of identity theft, fraud and other consumer complaints were made to the Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI) last year.

"Now, more than ever, we have to be alert for financial abuse and exploitation of the elderly," said TDCI Commissioner Leslie A. Newman. "Increasing Tennesseans' awareness of fraudulent practices is the primary way to help prevent further exploitation."

TDCI and DHS are partnering with grassroots organizations -- such as the Tennessee Vulnerable Adult Coalition and the Adult Abuse Coalitions of South Central, East, Upper Cumberland, Middle and West Tennessee -- to stem the growing problems of abuse and financial exploitation of the elderly and vulnerable adults.

For more information on reporting and preventing financial abuse and fraud, visit <http://tn.gov/consumer/> or call 615-741-6007.

For more information on elder abuse, visit http://state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/afs_aps.html . To report abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, call APS toll free **1-888-APS-TENN (1-888-277-8366)**.

For a list of all Elder Abuse Awareness Day events across the state, or to watch Commissioners Lodge and Newman's public service announcement, please visit the TVAC website at: www.tvaonline.org.

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