

Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse

Health care practitioners, e.g. doctors, dentists, nurses, therapists, and their office staff, are in a position to observe or hear from their patients about abuse of elders and dependent adults, and have the responsibility to protect these patients. All are mandated reporters.

If you suspect abuse:

Mandated reporters must report any incident of alleged or suspected physical, emotional, or financial harm or abuse, or a *reasonable suspicion of abuse*, that comes to their attention.

If you have questions about a situation or are making a report, call the TIES Line at Aging and Adult Services toll-free at (800) 675-8437 (any time of the day or night, any day of the week). If you are not sure whether a report is appropriate, call and discuss it with the social worker or public health nurse on duty.

What happens when a report is made?

A social worker or public health nurse will respond to and investigate the report. If appropriate, an intervention and support plan will be developed using the least restrictive method of intervention. The client has the right to refuse any service or support. If a request for Adult Protective Services is not considered appropriate, the TIES line is available for consultation or to provide information and referral services.

For more information, go to www.smhealth.org and follow links to Aging and Adult Services, Protection, and Adult Protective Services.

Legal Requirements

The Welfare and Institutions Code, Section 15630, states:

"Any mandated reporter who, in his or her professional capacity, or within the scope of his or her employment, has observed or has knowledge of an incident that reasonably appears to be physical abuse, abandonment, isolation, financial abuse, or neglect, or is told by an elder or dependent adult that he or she has experienced behavior constituting physical abuse, abandonment, isolation, financial abuse, or neglect, or reasonably suspects abuse shall report the known or suspected instance of abuse by telephone immediately or as soon as possible, and by written report sent within two working days."

What about possible abuse encountered outside of your medical role?

If you are concerned or suspect that someone you know outside of your professional activities is at risk of physical, emotional, or financial harm or abuse, you are encouraged but not mandated to make a report by calling the number listed above. If you are in a situation outside of your medical care role, you are not required to give your name.

For information, advice and 24-hour emergency response on elder care issues, call the TIES Line at Aging and Adult Services:

(800) 675-8437

(650) 573-3900

**(Outside CA)
(800) 994-6166 (TDD)**

Reports should be made immediately, or as soon as practically possible, by telephone to 1-800-675-8437. In addition, the "Report of Suspected Dependent Adult/Elder Abuse" (see next page) should be sent within 2 working days to:

Adult Protective Services

225 37th Avenue

San Mateo, CA 94403

☎ (650) 573-2310 fax

See next page for a copy of the reporting form.