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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
November 16, 2020

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**ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE AND DEPT. OF DISABILITIES, AGING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING LAUNCH ELDER ABUSE HELP GUIDE**

***New Guide Lays out Help Options for Older Vermonters Experiencing Abuse or Exploitation***

MONTPELIER - Today, the Attorney General's Elder Protection Initiative (EPI) and the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) announced the release of a help guide for older Vermonters experiencing abuse or exploitation. The guide, "*Finding Help: Abuse, Exploitation and Neglect in Later Life*," explains the different kinds of elder abuse and exploitation that can occur. It also describes the different kinds of nonprofit programs and services available in Vermont to support older individuals experiencing abuse/exploitation. Lastly, it provides a how-to on reporting elder abuse/exploitation for government investigation and response. A link to the new guide is available [here](#).

"Everyone deserves to age with dignity," said Attorney General T.J. Donovan. "If you are an older Vermonter experiencing any form of abuse or exploitation, or you are concerned that an older Vermonter is experiencing abuse or exploitation, you are not alone. In Vermont, there are many nonprofit organizations and government agencies standing by to provide you with support and, if needed, protection. This guide explains what those options are in a clear, comprehensive way."

Numerous Vermont nonprofit organizations that provide support and protection to older Vermonters assisted with the guide's development, including the Area Agencies on Aging, the Vermont Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence, Vermont Legal Aid, Disability Rights Vermont, the Financial Abuse Specialist Team of Vermont, and Vermont 2-1-1. The guide explains the range of free services these and other organizations and professionals can provide, including:

- Elder abuse hotlines and helplines;
- Case managers and social workers;
- Domestic & sexual violence organizations;
- Legal services; and
- Other community-based organizations & professionals, including, health care providers, restorative justice centers, and religious leaders.

“This guide is timely and necessary, particularly in light of COVID-19,” said DAIL Commissioner Monica Hutt. “The pandemic is increasing isolation for older Vermonters and limiting their opportunities to connect with family, friends and community members. This combination of factors may heighten the risk for elder abuse and financial exploitation. Now is the time to ensure we’re all aware of the help options--whether we’re older Vermonters, those who care for them, or professionals positioned to notice and respond to elder abuse and exploitation. This guide is the first of its kind in Vermont to explain these help options in a comprehensive way.”

Attorney General Donovan launched the EPI in June 2018. The EPI consists of attorneys and investigators from the Attorney General’s Criminal, Public Protection, and Human Services Divisions.\* The EPI’s mission is to promote the safety and security of older Vermonters through enforcement action, legislation, public education, and community engagement. To visit the EPI’s website, click [here](#) or visit [ago.vermont.gov/epi/](http://ago.vermont.gov/epi/).

DAIL’s mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or live with a disability – with dignity, respect, and independence. Together, across DAIL’s five divisions, and with hundreds of service providers and community partners, DAIL serves tens of thousands of Vermonters, promoting self-determination, respect for all, and full inclusion in the life of community. Learn more at [dail.vermont.gov](http://dail.vermont.gov).

\* The AGO’s Criminal Division includes the Medicaid Fraud & Residential Abuse Unit (MFRAU). MFRAU receives 75 percent of its funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under a grant award totaling \$1,041,816 for Federal fiscal year FY 2021. The remaining 25 percent, totaling \$347,272 for FY 2021, is funded by the State of Vermont.

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