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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **DAIL and AG Commemorate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**

MONTPELIER - Tomorrow, Vermont's Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL) and the Office of the Attorney General join local, national, and global partners in commemorating [World Elder Abuse Awareness Day](#). The purpose of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is to raise awareness and support prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

By 2030, 1 in 3 Vermonters will be age 60 or older. Nationally, of this 60+ age cohort, 1 in 10 adults experience some form of mistreatment each year. This mistreatment can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment, financial exploitation (often by family members or caregivers), and psychological and emotional abuse.

More troubling, for every case of reported elder abuse, neglect or exploitation, about 23 instances go unreported. Vermont's Adult Protective Services (APS) receives over 4,000 reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation a year. "Like local and state law enforcement, we're prepared to address concerns of abuse and exploitation, but we can only address them if they're brought to our attention," says Joe Nusbaum, APS Director. "The public is a critical partner in this effort. We have great concern for how many Vermonters likely experience some form of abuse or exploitation behind closed doors," he said.

"Our state needs to make addressing elder abuse a priority," said Attorney General T.J. Donovan. "Many Vermonters live in isolation. That means it is our responsibility as community members, wherever we live, to be the eyes and ears for each other." DAIL Commissioner Monica Hutt shares this collaborative approach. "We all have the right to be safe from abuse and

exploitation,” she said, “which means we all need to work together to ensure older Vermonters are able to age with justice, dignity and respect.”

The National Center on Elder Abuse names four things that anyone can do to build community supports for elder abuse:

- 1) Learn the signs of elder abuse, listed below, and how we can solve the issue together.
- 2) Prevent isolation. Call or visit older loved ones and ask how they are doing on a regular basis.
- 3) Talk to friends and family members about how we can all age well and reduce abuse with programs and services like law enforcement, community centers, and public transportation.
- 4) Sign up to be a friendly visitor to an older person in our communities. In Vermont, you can serve as a friendly visitor through various Senior Corps programs (available at <https://servermont.vermont.gov/senior-corps-programs-vermont>) and/or your local Area Agency on Aging (1-800-642-5119).

While one sign does not necessarily indicate abuse, some tell-tale signs that indicate abuse are:

<b>Physical</b>	Bruises, pressure marks or sores, broken bones, abrasions, and burns
<b>Sexual</b>	Bruises or injury to the genital area which may present as difficulty moving or sitting
<b>Emotional</b>	Withdrawal from normal activities, anxiety, depression, unusual behavior, or unease
<b>Neglect</b>	Bedsore, unattended medical needs, poor hygiene, and unusual weight loss
<b>Financial</b>	Uncharacteristic purchases by the individual or caregiver; failure to pay bills or keep appointments; questionable behavior

DAIL and the Office of the Attorney General, through its new Elder Protection Initiative, are collaborating with each other and partners across the state to strengthen efforts to prevent abuse and support those who are impacted. They are providing public education, participating in statewide working groups, undertaking enforcement actions and criminal prosecutions, and advocating to strengthen laws to protect older Vermonters and vulnerable adults.

To report suspected elder abuse, neglect or exploitation, contact your local police. If the survivor/victim potentially qualifies as a “vulnerable adult” (defined [here](#)), you may also make a report to Adult Protective Services by calling 1-800-564-1612 or reporting online at: <https://dlp.vermont.gov/aps/make-aps-report>. If you suspect abuse of a person living in a nursing home, assisted living facility, or board and care home, also contact the State Long Term Care Ombudsman at 1-800-889-2047.

***About the Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living (DAIL):***

*Our mission is to make Vermont the best state in which to grow old or to live with a disability - with dignity, respect and independence.*



<http://dail.vermont.gov/> ~ <https://www.facebook.com/DAILVT>

***About the Attorney General's Elder Protection Initiative (EPI):***

*The Mission of the Elder Protection Initiative is to promote the safety and security of older Vermonters through public education, stakeholder engagement, legislative advocacy and enforcement action.*

<https://ago.vermont.gov/epi/>

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