



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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### Kentucky groups receive awards for elder abuse prevention

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (August 7, 2019) - Two community groups have received awards for their work to stop elder abuse. The Department for Community Based Services (DCBS), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), presented the awards at a recent conference focusing on elder abuse prevention on the local level.

Kentucky River Council Against Maltreatment of Elders (CAME) and Northern Kentucky Elder Maltreatment Alliance (EMA) each received Public Awareness Initiative awards of \$300. The awards recognize the groups for showing a commitment to elder abuse prevention through public outreach from May 2018 - May 2019.

DCBS Commissioner Eric Clark said that local efforts from community groups are making a difference for Kentucky's senior citizens.

"The work of these councils shows that we can all be a part of establishing well-being for the older members of our communities," he said. "Through partnership with our local offices and other agencies, the Local Coordinating Councils on Elder Abuse (LCCEAs) are making elder abuse a priority across their multi-county areas. I thank them for their programming that has helped save lives."

CAME and EMA are part of the state's network of 22 LCCEAs, which covers 92 counties. The councils provide focused education to their communities to protect the elder population from abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.

CAME is in Breathitt, Knott, Lee, Leslie, Letcher, Owsley, Perry and Wolfe counties.

CAME organized several successful projects over the past year. The council created awareness of elder abuse by distributing colored pompoms and making prevention announcements during regional and district high school basketball games, distributing window clings that advertise the elder abuse reporting hot line at senior centers and health fairs and printing informational table tents for restaurants and businesses to display.

Individual council members also hosted awareness walks in their hometowns of Campton and Whitesburg.

Also, in March, CAME hosted its annual Elder Abuse Awareness conference, which attracted about 200 attendees. Local law enforcement, volunteers, senior facility staff and social workers were honored then for outstanding work in serving the elderly in the community.

EMA covers Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen or Pendleton counties. During the evaluation period, The EMA co-hosted a first responders' training to raise awareness of behaviors of individuals with dementia and provide instructions on how to manage in a crisis. The council created a calendar called "Senior Stars 2019," which features community seniors participating in different activities to raise awareness about elder abuse. The group partnered with the Kentucky Department for Financial Institutions for the Senior Scam Jam to prevent fraud against elderly citizens.

EMA also cosponsors a special initiative called SARAH – Sheltering, Advocating, Removing and Housing – with the Northern Kentucky Aging and Disability Resource Center. SARAH is designed to assist older adults who are residents of one of the eight EMA counties and are in an emergent situation like violence, abuse and/or neglect. SARAH provides one-time financial assistance to older adults in dire situations to produce a positive outcome and achieve a better quality of life. SARAH is a last-resort fund when no additional government, corporate, or private assistance is available.

CHFS gives administrative support to the LCCEAs, which provide elder abuse education and outreach at the local and regional levels depending on the needs of the

communities. Kentucky's network involves local law enforcement, county officials, advocates, nursing homes, local businesses, social service agencies and individuals. They share a common goal of ending abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly in their communities by offering specific advocacy, outreach and prevention strategies.

At the LCCEA conference, attendees learned about protecting senior citizens from fraud, prescription drug abuse prevention and services offered through the Cabinet's Department for Aging and Independent Living.

Kentucky received 29,249 calls to report abuse, neglect and exploitation of people age 60 and older for state fiscal year 2018.

In Kentucky, reporting suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation is the law, and it's confidential. The toll-free reporting hotline is 1-877-KYSAFE1 (1-877-597-2331).

Kentuckians can help the fight against elder abuse by becoming involved with their LCCEAs. Membership is free and open to anyone interested in working to prevent elder abuse in his or her community.

To become involved with your community's LCCEA or to inquire about events, contact state LCCEA liaison Stacy Carey at 502-564-7043.

Get more information about the councils and recognizing the signs of elder abuse online at <https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dcbs/dpp/apb/Pages/elder-abuse.aspx>.

### **Recognize the Signs of Elder Abuse**

If you believe an elderly person is being abused, neglected or exploited, call 1-877-KYSAFE1 (1-877-597-2331), the state's abuse hotline. If you believe there is imminent risk, immediately call 911 or local law enforcement.

Learn to recognize the following signs of neglect and abuse.

#### **Neglect**

- Dirty and uncombed hair; dirty and torn or climate-inappropriate clothes; or offensive body odor
- Hoarding
- Lack of glasses, dentures or hearing aid, or lack of medical care

- Bedsores
- Recent suffering or loss of spouse, family members or close friends
- Obvious malnutrition, dehydration

### **Physical Abuse**

- Frequent injuries such as bruises, burns, broken bones; explanation of the injury seems unrealistic
- Multiple bruises in various stages of healing, particularly bruises on inner arms or thighs
- Experiences pain when touched
- Loss of bowel and bladder control
- Never leaves the house or allows visitors
- Never mentions family or friends

### **Sexual Abuse**

- Evidence of sexually transmitted disease
- Irritation or injuries to the mouth, genitals or anus
- Upset when changed or bathed
- Fearful of a particular person
- Loss of bowel and bladder control

### **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

- Isolated from family and friends
- Sudden dramatic change in behavior, appearing withdrawn, depressed, hesitant to talk openly
- Caregiver won't let victim speak for herself or himself
- Caregiver scolds, insults, threatens victim
- Trembling, clinging

### **Financial Abuse**

- Unusual activity in bank account; sudden large withdrawals, expenditures that are not consistent with past financial history

- Use of automated teller machines (ATM) when the person has no history of using ATMs or cannot walk
- A recent will, when the person seems incapable of writing a will
- Rights signed away on legal papers without understanding what the papers mean
- Unpaid bills, such as house payment, rent, taxes or utilities

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*