

How to Identify Elder Abuse & Neglect

Tips for Law Enforcement
and First Responders

Protecting Virginia's Most Vulnerable Citizens

Patient abuse or neglect occurs when a caregiver knowingly causes physical harm, or fails to provide needed medical services, to a patient receiving in-home care or residing in a health care facility. The Virginia Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit investigates and prosecutes patient abuse and neglect cases when the caregiver is paid through the Medicaid program. The office is also authorized to investigate abuse or neglect of patients residing in board or care facilities - regardless of the payment source.



**Attorney General
Mark R. Herring**

If you suspect abuse or neglect, contact us today. My office provides nurse reviews of medical records and will work second chair if you prefer to keep your investigation local.



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Potential Markers of Elder Abuse

Physical Condition and Quality of Care:

- Documented but untreated injuries.
- Undocumented injuries and fractures.
- Severe decubitus ulcers.
- Medical orders not followed.
- Poor oral care, poor hygiene, and lack of cleanliness of resident.
- Malnourished residents that have no documentation for low weight.
- Bruising on nonambulatory residents; bruising in unusual locations.
- Family has statements and facts concerning poor care.
- Level of care for residents with nonattentive family members.
- Death/injury of resident while wandering.

Facility Characteristics

- Unchanged linens.
- Strong odors (urine, feces).
- Trash cans that have not been emptied.
- Food issues (cafeteria smells at all hours; food left on trays).
- Past problems.

Inconsistencies between

- Medical records, statements made by staff members, or what is viewed by investigator.
- Statements given by different groups.
- The reported time of death and condition of the body.

Staff Behaviors

- Staff members who follow the investigator too closely.
- Lack of knowledge or concern about a resident.
- Evasiveness, both unintended and purposeful, verbal and nonverbal.
- Facility's unwillingness to release medical records.

Source: National Institute of Justice