

From: EngAGE@CDA EngAGE@aging.ca.gov 
Subject: FW: Master Plan for Aging - Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County Comments & Recommendations -
Date: February 21, 2020 at 7:14 AM
To: Carrie Graham clgraham@berkeley.edu, Wong, Jennifer@CDA jennifer.wong@aging.ca.gov
Cc: Wade, Kim McCoy@CDA kim.mccoy.wade@aging.ca.gov



Carrie and Jenn, I'm forwarding materials/recommendations for the MPA related to elder abuse. Thanks.

Ellen

From: Cynthia Thorp <cindythorp123@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 20, 2020 9:28 PM
To: EngAGE@CDA <EngAGE@aging.ca.gov>; Ware, Kathy@CDA <Kathy.Ware@aging.ca.gov>
Cc: Michele Greenfield <mmgreenfld@aol.com>; Cynthia Thorp <cindythorp123@gmail.com>
Subject: Master Plan for Aging - Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County Comments & Recommendations -

Dear Kim McCoy Wade,

It was a pleasure to meet you at the Peninsula Forum at Avenidas Rose Kleiner Center on January 23, 2020. Thank you for the excellent work you and the committee are doing to draft recommendations for improving aging services and supports for Governor Newsom's statewide Master Plan for Aging. As promised, here are comments and recommendations from our Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County, an organization of professionals representing agencies serving older adults, which has worked since 1981 through education and advocacy to help prevent abuse of elder and dependent adults in our community.

We believe our comments and recommendations support the Values and Goals that your committee has identified in the Plan Framework and should be helpful to the committee in developing California's Master Plan. We are addressing the following:

- 1) How to provide long term services and supports to help older persons stay in their homes;
- 2) How to reduce isolation of older adults since this makes persons more vulnerable and at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- 3) How to train professionals and the community to prevent, identify, intervene and report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation; and
- 4) How to raise the public's awareness and understanding about the important issues of elder justice, elder mistreatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County – Who We Are

The Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County was formed in 1981. Composed of professionals representing agencies serving older adults, this

group is committed to the education, advocacy, and prevention of elder abuse and neglect.

Through its major advocacy efforts, the Elder Abuse Task Force has worked to establish mandatory reporting legislation and maintain county protective services. The Elder Abuse Task Force has focused on professional education and community awareness of elder abuse. The group has hosted and participated in training conferences featuring national experts on this issue. The Elder Abuse Task Force's training manual, *Elder Abuse – Guidelines for Professional Assessment and Reporting (Update April 2019)* and video, *The Silent Cry: Elder Abuse Assessment and Reporting (Update 2019)*, have been distributed throughout the United States. See "Publications" section above for links to these materials.

The Elder Abuse Task Force continues to meet on a monthly basis, working toward prevention of elder abuse and awareness of elders as a valuable and vibrant part of our community, who deserve to be treated fairly and with dignity by all of us.

1) How to provide long term services and supports to help older persons stay in their homes.

With the growing older population, there is a need for California to better assist older persons and their families in making quality care at home available and affordable. With so many persons wishing to remain in their own homes, this need is critical to help ensure both greater numbers and quality of caregivers. For California to lead in this area, we need to find the means to professionalize the role of caregivers. The importance of the caregiver role needs to be reflected in its training, status, and remuneration.

When caregivers are few and training and oversight are limited, we place some of the most vulnerable older and dependent adults at most risk for abuse and neglect, causing stress to both elders and their families. In addition, as the population ages, the number of caregivers needed will not be available unless new persons are attracted to and trained for this role. We propose that there may be an expanded role for the Public Authority.

2) How to reduce isolation of older adults since this makes the person more vulnerable and at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Older persons and society in general benefit when older persons are included and engaged within the larger communities where they live. Isolation of older persons leaves them more vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation. Senior centers play an important role in the provision of services under the Older Americans Act, by being a focal point for many types of senior services. At the same time participation by older adults in activities meals and services at the

same time, participation by older adults in activities, meals and services at the senior centers reduces the risk that the person remains isolated and easy prey for abuse, neglect or exploitation.

We recommend strong financial support for senior centers in local communities and for transportation so older persons can easily access the senior centers and all they offer. We also recommend expanding the Adult Day Health programs, which serve a similar function for older adults who need a higher level of care during the day to be able to remain living in the community. Programs that provide companionship for older persons, possibly multi-age, also have an important role, as long as the structure of the program provides a longer-term commitment by the companion so a meaningful relationship can be established.

3) How to train professionals to prevent, identify, intervene and report suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County has developed comprehensive training materials for professionals of all levels and disciplines who are mandated reporters of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse under California law. An easy-to-use manual and a training video discusses elder abuse identification, assessment and intervention guidelines, reporting requirements, protections for mandated reporters, and community resources. These training materials can be used by all counties in California by adding local resource numbers, and can be distributed by newsletter, posted on websites, or printed and used for in-house trainings.

We encourage you to use these materials and make them broadly available to all professionals who work with older and dependent adults, since nearly all professionals working with these populations are mandated reporters of suspected abuse.

We are attaching the “Dear Colleague” letter that we wrote that you can modify and use to distribute these materials. The letter introduces the training materials and has attachments or links to the actual materials. These include the training manual, *Elder Abuse—Guidelines for Professional Assessment and Reporting (Update April 2019)* and the training video, *The Silent Cry: Elder Abuse Assessment and Reporting (Update 2019)*. The letter also has links for the current elder abuse reporting forms required by California.

Also attached to the “Dear Colleague” letter is the website introduction that programs can post to make these training materials available, entitled *Elder Justice: Abuse Prevention and Reporting (2019)*. Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office already posts this article, *Elder Justice: Abuse Prevention and Reporting*, and also posts the manual referred to above.

4) How to raise the public’s awareness and understanding about the important issues of elder justice, elder mistreatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

We recommend that the Department of Aging create an extensive public information campaign as the Department did many years ago, to raise the public’s awareness and understanding about the important issues of elder

public's awareness and understanding about the important issues of elder justice, elder mistreatment, abuse, neglect and exploitation (although last time the term "elder justice" was not used). The Department created posters, public service announcements, and even information on buses to draw the public's attention to this important issue and provided contact information for where to call if abuse or neglect is suspected. This was an effective way to get the word out to all generations that we all need to help protect older and dependent adults.

It may be possible to create a slogan, or have a prominent public figure help get the word out. An aging group in the past stated, "We have met the aging, and they are us." Something like this might be catchy to get people to pay attention.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations for use in developing California's Master Plan. We look forward to following the progress of the Master Plan as it develops.

Please feel free to contact us for further information or with any questions you may have.

Sincerely

Michele Greenfield, M.S.W.
Cynthia Thorp, Esq.
Co-Chairpersons
Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County



Dear Colleague
Letter...19.pdf



Website
Introdu...19).pdf



Elder Abuse —
Guideli...19).pdf

Newsletter Introduction to Online Elder Abuse Professional Training Materials (2019)

Elder abuse professional training materials, including a video and manual, are now available online to assist professionals with their critical role in identifying the various types of elder and dependent adult abuse, assessing and documenting the situation carefully, intervening appropriately, and reporting suspected abuse and neglect.

Video: *The Silent Cry: Elder Abuse Assessment and Reporting (Update 2019)*
<https://youtu.be/6kojmQGoDp0>

Manual: *Elder Abuse – Guidelines for Professional Assessment and Reporting (April 2019)*
<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/da/prosecution/DistrictAttorneyDepartments/Documents/Elder%20Abuse%20-%20E2%80%93%20Guidelines%20for%20Professional%20Assessment%20and%20Reporting%20-%20April%202019%29.pdf>

These comprehensive training materials are appropriate for all skill levels and are designed for use in regular in-house continuing education programs for all mandated reporters of elder and

use in regular in-house continuing education programs for all mandated reporters of elder and dependent adult abuse, including care custodians, health practitioners, clergy, and officers and employees of financial institutions. These materials may be adapted by all counties in California by adding local reporting agencies and community resources.

These important training materials were developed by the Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County, an organization of professionals representing agencies serving older adults, which has worked since 1981 through education and advocacy to help prevent abuse of elder and dependent adults in our community. For questions (not cases), please contact the Elder Abuse Task Force of Santa Clara County at ElderAbuseTaskForce@hotmail.com.