

# Elder Abuse is a Crying Shame



A NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY RESTORING ELDER SAFETY TODAY

Winter 2015

## HELP FOR ABUSE VICTIMS: ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAMS

Victims of abuse struggle to stay safe. They may move to other communities, switch jobs, move to another state and some even change their names. Older victims of abuse may leave their home where the abuser lives to find a safe place, and then they may have difficulty receiving their mail, including bank statements, checks, and/or mail-order medications. The regular process for forwarding one's mail includes the sending of a letter to the old address with verification of the new address, thus potentially allowing the abuser to know the victim's new address. The abuser/stalker many times continues to try to find their victim by using easily accessible public records to continue to harass their victim.

Address Confidentiality Programs (ACPs) were created to protect victims of abuse, stalking, domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes from offenders who use public records, such as voter or drivers' license registries, to locate them. These programs give victims a legal substitute address (usually a post office box) to use in place of their physical address; this address can be used whenever an address is required by public agencies. First class mail sent to the substitute address is forwarded to the victim's actual address. Thirty-six states have

launched Address Confidentiality Programs and laws governing eligibility vary from state to state. It is important to remember that these programs can only work if the perpetrator does not know where the victim lives, and when used in conjunction with other safety strategies. Government agencies must cooperate to keep the victim's location confidential. ACPs rely on local victim service providers for referrals, counseling, safety planning, and occasional application assistance to victims. Usually, the fewer people who know a victim's location, the safer he or she will be. ACPs offer both victims and government a promising and useful public safety tool. The contact information for Maryland's program, called Safe at Home is:

<http://www.sos.state.md.us/ACP/SafeAtHome.aspx>

Safe At Home - Office of the Secretary of State  
P.O. Box 2995, Annapolis, MD 21404  
(800) 633-9657 ext. 3875

**SAVE – THE – DATE**  
**WORLD ELDER ABUSE DAY**  
June 15, 2015  
9:30 am – 1:00 pm  
PERRY HALL PUBLIC LIBRARY  
9685 Honeygo Boulevard  
Perry Hall, MD  
*Sponsored by AARP MD*



**ALTIMORE  
COUNTY  
RESTORING  
ELDER  
SAFETY  
TODAY**

*BC-REST is a coalition working to educate and empower the community to identify and prevent elder abuse, neglect and exploitation in Baltimore County, through strategic alliances, advocacy and resource development. Our accomplishments include:*

- (1) Working with a task force to re-introduce **Project Safe**, a program to educate financial institutions and the public about financial exploitation.
- (2) Hosting a “shred-a-thon,” giving seniors an opportunity to safely dispose of old documents that contain personal and financial information, thus preventing identity theft.
- (3) Celebrating **World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** with a rally and seminar to energize public officials and concerned citizens to fight elder abuse.
- (4) Making **presentations** to groups including senior centers, community associations and neighborhood fairs.

**How Can I Get Involved?**

- \* **Call** 410-887-4200 to get on our mailing list. You will receive our newsletter and alerts about upcoming events.
  - \* **Inquire** about having your organization become a member of BC-REST, by calling 410-887-4200.
  - \* **Schedule** a presentation on elder abuse for your group by calling our office.
  - \* **Check out** our website, [www.bcpl.info/stopelderabuse](http://www.bcpl.info/stopelderabuse)
- Like us on face book – “Baltimore County Restoring Elder Safety Today.”



**AARP Corner**

**Fighting for Marylanders:  
AARP 2015 Legislative Priorities**

AARP is excited to be working for its members again during the 2015 Maryland Legislative Session, which just kicked off this week. Amongst the bulk of work to be done, two major issues stand at the forefront of our battle:

A major concern among older Marylanders is the fear of outliving one's finances. **Today, 47 percent—nearly HALF—of Maryland workers do not have access to a retirement plan through their employer.**

Additionally, there are at least 770,000 family caregivers in Maryland who need better support in order to care for their loved ones. **This is not a Democratic issue. This is not a Republican issue. This is a family issue.**

AARP MD will bring attention to these issues of Retirement Security and Family Caregiving. AARP is supporting “Maryland Secure Choice” a win-win piece of legislation that passed in Illinois late in 2014 and could give nearly a million more hard-working Americans a chance to save for their future. And it comes at no cost to employers or the state.

We'll also be urging state lawmakers to enact the CARE Act to better support family caregivers as they safely help older Marylanders stay at home. These family caregivers have a huge responsibility, and we can take some common sense steps that would make a world of difference for them.

Nearly 870,000 Marylanders age 50 and over are AARP members, making AARP the largest social change organization in the “Old Line” state. AARP works to help individuals 50+ and their families live the lives they want to live. The Maryland General Assembly just kicked off the 2015

Legislative Session, and AARP Maryland is working with volunteers and members to ensure important issues for older Marylanders are on the agenda.

I encourage you to check out our plan for 2015. Visit our website at [www.aarp.org/md](http://www.aarp.org/md) for more information on these issues.

**Want More Information on our Legislative Work?** Contact AARP MD's Associate State Director for Advocacy, Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org).

**Become a Volunteer Advocate!** Your opinions matter! AARP Maryland partners with volunteer advocates to work in Annapolis over the course of the three-month legislative session. Volunteer advocates will meet new people, may travel to Annapolis, experience the legislative process and receive training! Join our volunteer corps to share your thoughts and opinions with Legislators. To volunteer or if you have questions email [mdaarp@aarp.org](mailto:mdaarp@aarp.org) or call 1-866-542-8163.

Article submitted by:  
Jen Holz, Assoc. State Dir of Outreach  
AARP Maryland



**FREE PRESENTATIONS  
ON ELDER ABUSE**

**BCREST can provide educational presentations to your community group, place of business, civic organization or congregation, if there is an interest in learning more about Elder Abuse.**

Contact BCREST to schedule a presentation by calling the:  
**BALTIMORE COUNTY  
OMBUDSMAN OFFICE AT  
#410-887-4200**

## Tips for Caregivers to Recognize Abuse of Prescription Medications

One frequent source of elder self-neglect is the inadvertent and often dangerous misuse of prescription and over-the-counter medications. At a recent workshop for licensed mental health professionals, Carrie Miller, LCSW-C, LCADC and Thomas F. Krajewski, MD presented many of the risks and warning signs of abuse of medications by older adults. Some tips for family caregivers:

Be sure the older person's doctor is aware of the senior's history with medications, use/abuse of substances earlier in their life, current medications, and complete health history.

-Either the senior or family needs to tell the doctor how the older patient is responding to prescription medications. Older people are often more sensitive to medication. Even aspirin may be toxic to some individuals.

-Keep in mind that older adults may be more susceptible to drug interactions and the effects of drinking alcohol while taking prescription medications.

-Some warning signs to report to the physician include a senior's preoccupation with their medications; disorientation, confusion, irritability or restlessness; social withdrawal and changes in sleeping, eating, hygiene or personal grooming habits. These are not normal signs of aging and must be brought to the attention of a professional.

*Submitted by:*

Barbara K. Anderson,  
Executive Director  
Pro Bono Counseling Project

## Who is mandated to report of Elder Abuse in the state of Maryland?

**Maryland law requires that law enforcement agents, human service professionals and health care practitioners report any suspected cases of elder abuse.**

### Can I Report Elder Abuse?

**Anyone** who witnesses or suspects any case of elder abuse should report it immediately.

### How Do I Report Elder Abuse?

**Contact 911 or the local sheriff. To report suspected abuse in the community or an assisted living facility call:** Baltimore County Department of Social Services – Adult Protective Services - 410-853-3000 – *make a language selection, then press #2 for adult services.*

**To report suspected abuse in a nursing home call:** Baltimore County Long Term Care Ombudsman - 410-887-4200

**For information about elder abuse call:** Baltimore County Department of Aging - 410-887-2594. *You may reach any of these offices with Maryland Relay 711.*



## Types of Elder Abuse

**Physical Abuse** – Use of force to threaten or physically injure a vulnerable elder.

**Emotional Abuse** – Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause mental anguish, pain, or distress to a senior.

**Sexual Abuse** – Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.

**Exploitation** – Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person's money or property.

**Neglect** – A caregiver's failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder's safety, physical, or emotional needs.

**Abandonment** – Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.

**Self Neglect** – An inability to understand the consequences of one's own actions or inaction, which leads to, or may lead to, harm or endangerment.

**Remember: You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate the suspicions.**

Source: [www.ncea.aoa.gov](http://www.ncea.aoa.gov)

### BC-REST Newsletter Committee:

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