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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IL Department on Aging Launches Campaign to Protect Seniors and Adults with Disabilities from Abuse

Receives \$2.1 million for a 3-year campaign; Engage2Change

Springfield – The Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) has launched a new public and professional awareness campaign to remind everyone about the importance of reporting suspected abuse, neglect and exploitation of persons ages 60 and older and persons with disabilities ages 18-59.

Specifically, [Engage2Change](#) is a three-year campaign theme for IDoA's Office of Adult Protective Services (APS). IDoA's APS received a \$2.1 million grant from the federal Administration for Community Living. The grant will execute a public awareness campaign through the CBS Community Partnership Division to include broadcast television, email marketing, and digital platforms which encourage people to do their part to assist in preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable Illinoisans. Additionally, other components of the grant include APS Caseworker Simulation Training, Caseworker Trauma-Informed Training, and Legal Professional Training to educate the judiciary and legal professions about APS.

In 2019, Adult Protective Services at IDoA responded to more than 21,000 reports of suspected abuse, neglect and financial exploitation of adults with disabilities and adults 60 years of age and older. Abuse takes many forms that include financial exploitation, emotional abuse, passive neglect, physical abuse, willful deprivation, confinement, and sexual abuse; and these often occur in tandem. Victims are often abused by family members or other relatives.

"Unfortunately, we know abuse directly coincides with social isolation. And with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many people are forced to stay in dangerous situations because they have nowhere else to go," said Paula Basta, Director of IDoA. "Victims of abuse or neglect may not be able to call for help because they are not alone or are likely to be overheard. We cannot assume that someone else will report it. We need every Illinois resident to **engage to make the change.**"

If you are a victim of abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation - or suspect that someone you know is a victim - call our **statewide 24-hour Abuse Hotline at 866-800-1409**, or visit www.illinois.gov/aging/engage/. Trained professionals are available and prepared to take reports of suspected abuse and forward them promptly to local adult protective service agencies. All calls and information related to abuse, neglect, and exploitation are strictly confidential. The sooner we know about the abuse, the sooner we can put a stop to it.

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Respect for yesterday. Support for today. Planning for tomorrow.
www.illinois.gov/aging

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the Senior Helpline at 1-800-252-8966; 1-888-206-1327 (TTY)