



## PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Kimberly Parker 312/814.1577  
[Kimberly.Parker@illinois.gov](mailto:Kimberly.Parker@illinois.gov)

### State Kicks Off Campaign to Protect Seniors From Abuse

*IL Dept on Aging's Elder Abuse Awareness campaign coincides with extending protective services to some people with disabilities*

**SPRINGFIELD - July 2, 2013.** Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) Director John K. Holton, Ph.D., today kicked off *Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month*, in Illinois. Elder abuse refers to a negligent act (physical, sexual, emotional, confinement, passive neglect, willful deprivation, or financial exploitation) by a caregiver or another person known by the victim that causes harm or a serious risk of harm to a vulnerable adult 60 years of age or older. Each year in July the state observes a month long campaign to educate and raise awareness about elder abuse. Governor Pat Quinn issued a proclamation for *Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month*. (Full proclamation follows the press release).

"This year marks the ninth year of the statewide campaign and since starting the annual campaign we have documented an increase in the number of calls to report suspected abuse," said Director Holton. "There are more than two million older adults, ages 60 and older, in Illinois. And it is estimated about five percent or 100,000 older adults fall victim to elder abuse each year, but most incidents go unreported. If you suspect abuse, report it."

IDoA operates a 24 hour hotline for the purpose of reporting the abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of an eligible adult. **The number for the 24 hour Adult Protective Services Hotline is (866) 800-1409 or TTY (888) 206-1327.** Trained professionals on the hotline take reports of abuse and promptly forward them to local protective service agencies and/or law enforcement. There are resources to help victims and all calls and information related to suspected abuse are confidential. Look for specific indicators that may help point to abuse:

- Untreated injuries, bruises, burns, sprains or dislocations, scratches and cuts
- Sudden changes in behavior, unusual depression and/or withdrawal in social settings
- Tense relationships/frequent arguments with the caregiver or a caregiver's refusal to allow visitors
- Dehydration, unusual weight loss, poor hygiene, untreated health problems, unsafe living conditions; and
- Sudden financial changes: bank account/practices, additional names on victim's bank signature card, unauthorized withdrawal of victim's funds using victim's ATM/credit card, & abrupt changes on a will or other financial documents

Since the start of *Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month* campaign that stresses the importance of reporting suspected elder abuse, numbers of reported cases in Illinois have increased. In FY 05, the year prior to starting the campaign, only 8,584 reports of elder abuse were received. In FY 12 11,840 reports were received.

This month's awareness campaign coincides with IDoA extending its adult protective services (APS) to people with disabilities ages 18 to 59 who live in a domestic setting. As of July 1 APS, including responsibilities of the Adults with Disabilities Domestic Abuse Program formerly of the Dept of Human Services, is handled by IDoA.

For general information about programs to assist older adults in Illinois and their caregivers, call the Department on Aging Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 or for TTY (hearing impaired use only) call 1-888-206-1327 or log on to the website at [www.state.il.us/aging/](http://www.state.il.us/aging/).