

Timothy Jeffries, Director

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MEDIA CONTACT
Office of Communications
602-542-4296
PIO@azdes.gov

DES Recognizes World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

PHOENIX – Each year, one in ten elderly Americans is abused, neglected or exploited; however, experts believe only one in fourteen cases is actually reported. Tomorrow (June 15th) is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security's (DES) Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) urges everyone to take measures to protect the elderly by watching for signs of abuse, neglect and exploitation and report them.

"All adults, particularly the elderly and vulnerable, deserve protection to live their lives free from abuse, neglect, and exploitation," said Director Tim Jeffries. "We will never rest, nor will we ever pause our vigorous efforts to shield and protect the most vulnerable Arizonans, particularly those in the most dire of circumstances."

"We all play a role in serving and protecting the vulnerable adults of Arizona," said Adult Protective Services Bureau Chief, Heather Patnode. "This is not just an Adult Protective Services issue, it's an issue for all Arizonans. Together we want to make sure this is a safe place, and together we can improve outcomes for vulnerable adults."

Since fiscal year 2012, DES Adult Protective Services (APS) has seen a 57 percent rise in new reports. At the end of fiscal year 2015, APS had investigated 13,793 cases, a 19 percent increase over the year before. Most of the cases investigated by APS involve neglect, specifically in the area of self-neglect: elderly individuals who aren't able to care for themselves. In some cases, there may actually be a caregiver, but that caregiver has limited training or experience.

Thanks to a comprehensive and targeted approach to case management and additional staffing, APS closed 13,394 cases at the end of fiscal year 2015; almost as many as were investigated. This was a 61 percent increase from fiscal year 2014. The number of active cases is now around 4,000. Investigators each now have about 35 cases, which is a significant improvement. The Department also made improvements to the reporting hotline which allowed them to take in more calls.

If you suspect and would like to report abuse, the reporting hotline number is 1-877-SOS-ADULT (1-877-767-2385) and it's available from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. An online report can be filed 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the [DES website](#).

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The Arizona Department of Economic Security makes Arizona stronger by helping Arizonans reach their potential through temporary assistance for those in need, and care for the vulnerable.

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