

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summit County Recognizes June 15 as Elder Abuse Awareness Day

On June 3, 2019, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Summit County Council passed a resolution declaring June 15, 2019, as Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The resolution asks the residents of Summit County to participate in events and programs offered throughout the community that seek to raise awareness of the abuse of older persons. Executive Shapiro asked employees to wear purple on June 14 in recognition of Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was started on June 15, 2006, by the World Health Organization and the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse to raise awareness and spotlight the resources available to vulnerable seniors. In 2012, the Ohio General Assembly passed House Bill 215, officially naming June 15 of each year as Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The Administration for Community Living estimates as many as 1 in 10 older Americans are abused or neglected each year, yet only 1 in 4 cases are reported to authorities. According to the Center for Elder Mistreatment at the University of Southern California, everyone can help prevent elder abuse by learning the signs and preventing the isolation of seniors.

“Elder abuse affects seniors from all socioeconomic groups, races, cultures and zip codes,” said Executive Shapiro. “Every senior has a right to live safely and with dignity. On Elder Abuse Awareness Day, I am asking all Summit County residents to take a moment to educate themselves about how they can help protect our seniors.”

In Summit County, Executive Shapiro’s Department of Job and Family Services administers the Adult Protective Services (APS) program. This state-mandated program is charged with investigating suspected cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults ages 60 and over. In 2018, the APS hotline received 3,700 calls concerning abuse of the elderly in Summit County. From January 1 to May 31 of 2019, 526 reported cases of elder abuse had been opened for investigation.

Upon receiving and accepting a referral, an APS investigator will meet with the identified adult in his or her home to determine the need for protective services. The investigator then follows the least restrictive alternative necessary to remedy conditions of abuse, neglect, or exploitation when

providing protective services. If a case does not rise to the level of protective services, the investigator may make referrals to supportive services. The program works collaboratively with the Summit County Elder Abuse Interdisciplinary Team (I-Team) to keep seniors safe and healthy in their homes. The I-Team is comprised of partners from the Summit County Sheriff's Office, Summit County Probate Court, Direction Home Akron Canton Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities, Akron Metropolitan Housing Authority and others.

“We all have a role to play in protecting our seniors from abuse, neglect and exploitation,” said Executive Shapiro. “My hope is that by raising awareness we will prevent the abuse of even one Summit County senior. If you are concerned about the health and safety of a senior, please contact law enforcement or my Adult Protective Services team immediately.”

In recognition of Elder Abuse Awareness Day, representatives from Adult Protective Services will be in attendance at the June 15 Akron RubberDucks game to educate attendees about how to spot and report abuse, neglect and exploitation.

To report a suspected case of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation, please call the Adult Protective Services hotline, available 24/7, at 330-643-7217. Anonymous reports are accepted.

To learn more about Adult Protective Services, please visit <https://www.summitdjfs.org/services/adult-protective-services.html>.

Signs of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse can include neglect, physical, emotional, financial, or sexual abuse. It is up to all of us to prevent and report suspected abuse. **Here are some signs of elder abuse that everyone should know.**



Emotional & Behavioral Signs

- Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
- Fear or anxiety
- Isolation from friends and family
- Withdrawal from normal activities
- Sadness



Physical Signs

- Broken bones, bruises, and welts
- Cuts, sores, or burns
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Sexually transmitted diseases without clear explanation
- Dirtiness, poor nutrition, or dehydration
- Unusual weight loss or dehydration
- Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker, and medications)



Financial Signs

- Unusual changes in a bank account or money management services
- Unusual or quick changes in a will or other financial documents
- Fake signatures on financial documents
- Unpaid bills

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