



DATE: June 14, 2021

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

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*Parks & Community Services Department*

SUBJECT: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

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Elder abuse describes a range of behavior including financial exploitation, mental abuse, neglect, personal exploitation, physical abuse, self-neglect, and sexual abuse. Elder abuse is often perpetrated by a known, trusted person, for instance an adult child, grandchild, or spouse. Elder abuse occurs in private homes, in institutional settings (such as nursing homes or assisted living facilities) and within businesses in the community. There are multiple signs of elder abuse including lack of food or medicine, bills not paid, bruises, black eyes and welts, sudden changes in behavior, withdrawal from social interactions, panic attacks and unexplained behavior changes. In our state, Adult Protective Services (APS) is the major state department that focuses on vulnerable adult abuse. In 2020 APS received 65,106 reports of vulnerable adult abuse. Twenty three percent of the reports involved persons aged 60 to 69, 26 percent involved persons aged 70 to 79 and 20 percent involved persons aged 80 to 89. Of the investigated allegations, 13,529 involved self-neglect and 14,922 involved financial allegations.

Unfortunately, while our older population is increasing, elder abuse is still underreported. A victim may not report abuse for varied reasons including inability to report, fear of retaliation, concern that a report will send the abuser to jail, or fear that reporting will lead to placement in a nursing home.

As community members, we all need to be knowledgeable and vigilant for signs of elder abuse. The King County Prosecutor's website answers many commonly asked questions about elder and vulnerable adult abuse. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/prosecutor/victim-community-support/elder-abuse.aspx>. The Adult Protective Services website includes pertinent information and a link for reporting vulnerable adult abuse. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/adult-protective-services>. Our Attorney General's website describes tactics used to target vulnerable adults such as: home improvement schemes, investment scams, internet scams and grandparent scams. <http://www.atg.wa.gov/senior-fraud>.

We invite the Council, staff, and all members of the community to join us in raising awareness of Elder Abuse. To report abuse or neglect of a vulnerable adult, contact the APS toll-free Hotline at 1-877-734-6277 or file a report on-line. For an emergency dial 911.

Thank you for your support of older adults in Bellevue.