

News Release

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Contact: Elisa Williams, Elisa.A.Williams@state.or.us, 503-509-9604

Community vigilance essential to preventing elder abuse

(Klamath Fall, Ore.) –The Oregon Department of Human Services’ Aging and People with Disabilities program, along with the Area Agency on Aging and other partners, will host a June 15 event in Klamath Falls for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to provide Oregonians with information on how to prevent and report abuse.

Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was launched by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The goal is to increase understanding of the cultural, social, economic, and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

“No amount of abuse is acceptable and as a community we need to work together to ensure that vulnerable Oregonians are safe,” said Ashley Carson Cottingham, director of the Aging and People with Disabilities program. “Abuse of older adults is a growing national issue and reversing this trend will require all of us to be vigilant.”

In 2016, DHS investigated 21,851 reports of possible abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults in Oregon’s licensed care facilities and in the community.

“It is important that Oregonians understand that adult abuse is a family issue, a public health issue, a community issue and an Oregon issue. Older adults make up the foundation of our history, families and communities across Oregon,” said Marie Cervantes, senior program manager for the Aging and People with Disabilities program’s adult protective services unit, who will speak at the June 15 event. “Abuse can happen to anyone. So, an engaged community can become a safe community for all who live there,” Cervantes continued.

DHS, in 2014, introduced a statewide hotline, **1-855-503-SAFE (7233)**, to make it easier to report abuse of vulnerable adults as well as child abuse. For more information on how to report abuse and neglect, visit this [DHS webpage](#).

The Aging and People with Disabilities program is working to raise awareness of elder abuse statewide. The program’s leaders, including Ashley Carson Cottingham, will speak at the [Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Summit](#) in Wilsonville on

June 15. Separately, Oregon Governor Kate Brown issued a proclamation recognizing World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

The free event in Klamath Falls will be from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Park, 10 George Nurse Way, Klamath Falls. It will feature a series of speakers including Klamath Falls Mayor Carol Westfall along with information booths and a fundraising drawing in which participants will have an opportunity to win paintings donated by Pacific Northwest-based artist Katherine Caughey of KC Gallery in Seattle.

Tickets for the drawing may be purchased in advance in Klamath Falls at the Aging and People with Disabilities district office at 714 Main St. Other locations for tickets include: Klamath & Lake Counties Council Area Agency on Aging, 404 Main St. #6; the Klamath Senior Center at 2045 Arthur St.; Spokes Unlimited at 1006 Main St.; Pacifica Senior Living at 2130 N. Eldorado Ave.; and, Crystal Terrace at 1000 Town Center Dr. Participants in the drawing do not need to be present at the event to win.

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