

# Attorney General Schimel: Hosts task force on elder abuse meeting in Milwaukee; recognizes elder crime victims' rights

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MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel held the third meeting of the Attorney General's Task Force on Elder Abuse.

“The statistics are sobering. One in nine seniors have reported being abused, neglected or exploited in the last twelve months, but we also know that elder abuse is drastically underreported[1],” said Attorney General Schimel. “The task force on elder abuse is working to not only raise awareness about the prevalence of elder abuse, but to provide solutions for protecting Wisconsin's growing senior population from abuse and exploitation, and empower senior citizens and their family members to take action if abuse is occurring.”

At the task force meeting on Wednesday, April 11, Attorney General Schimel and task force members discussed elder financial abuse cases in the court system; the Medical College of Wisconsin's work with medical professionals to identify abuse; and honoring the rights of elder crime victims.

The Elder Rights Project, which is part of Legal Action of Wisconsin, provided an update on the organization's civil legal services available to elder abuse victims. This program has been supported by a \$2.3 million federal Victims of Crime Act grant issued by the Wisconsin Department of Justice since 2015. The Elder Rights Project's services are provided statewide to any elder abuse victim aged 60 years or older without any income or asset limitations. In 2017, the project served more than 1,000 elder abuse victims across Wisconsin.

The Attorney General's Task Force on Elder Abuse, which was announced in August 2017, is charged with compiling the resources and knowledge of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to study the impact of elder abuse in Wisconsin and assess ways to improve outcomes for this growing population of citizens. In addition to developing strategies to address barriers in investigations and prosecutions of elder abuse, the task force will strengthen consumer protection for seniors and create recommendations for improved cross-system communications.

In addition to the task force's work, Attorney General Schimel has moved quickly to provide public safety tools to seniors and their loved ones. In October 2017, Attorney General Schimel expanded Dose of Reality, a statewide prevention campaign designed to raise awareness about prescription drug abuse and its effect on the opioid epidemic, to include resources and information unique to seniors and caregivers.

This year, the attorney general launched a radio ad campaign to raise awareness about elder abuse and encourage citizens to report abuse against seniors at Medicaid-funded or other senior care facilities. The attorney general also started "Safe Seniors Camera Program" a new pilot project in Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago counties that allows Wisconsin residents, who suspect a caregiver is abusing their loved one, to use a covert camera to provide surveillance over someone who may have been harmed by a caregiver in their residence.

To report suspected financial, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, please contact your county elder adult-at-risk agency or call 1-800-488-3780. If you witness an act of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that requires immediate attention, please call 911.