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**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**AG Schimel Announces Creation of Task Force on Elder Abuse**

MILWAUKEE, Wis. – Today, in front of attendees at the annual National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) Conference, Attorney General Brad Schimel announced the creation of the Attorney General’s Task Force on Elder Abuse.

“Over the next two decades, Wisconsin’s 65 and older population will increase by 72%<sup>1</sup>” and one in nine seniors have reported being abused, neglected or exploited in the past twelve months,<sup>2</sup>” said Attorney General Schimel. “Sadly, this group is seen by criminals as vulnerable and easily exploitable. With this rapidly growing population, we must act with urgency to protect our loved ones from becoming the target of financial, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.”

The Task Force on Elder Abuse 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 investigation and prosecutions of elder abuse, the task force will strengthen consumer protection for seniors and create recommendations for improved cross-system communications.

The task force, made up of representatives from Wisconsin Department of Justice, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions, the Wisconsin State Legislature, law enforcement, Wisconsin Court System, Board on Aging and Long Term Care, Wisconsin Bankers Association, crime victim services, adult protective services, senior living facilities, and senior citizen advocacy

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/dementia/demographics.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.napsa-now.org/policy-advocacy/exploitation/>

organizations, will meet quarterly, with issue-focused working groups that will meet on a monthly basis.

The inaugural meeting of Attorney General Schimel's Task Force on Elder Abuse will take place in October 2017.

For more information about elder abuse, please visit the [National Adult Protective Services Association](#), [National Center of Elder Abuse](#), [State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care](#) or Wisconsin [Aging and Disability Resource Centers](#).

To report suspected financial, physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, please [contact your county elder adult-at-risk agency](#). If you witness an act of abuse, neglect, or exploitation that requires immediate attention, please call 911.

### **Additional Elder Abuse Facts and Statistics**

- By 2040, 18 counties in Wisconsin are projected to have at least 33% of their total population made up of individuals ages 65 and older. Three of these counties are estimated to reach 40%.<sup>3</sup>
- Elder abuse is vastly underreported; only one in 44 cases of financial abuse is ever reported.<sup>4</sup>
- Abused seniors are three times more likely to die than those who had not been abused and elder abuse victims are four times more likely to go into a nursing home.<sup>5</sup>
- Almost one in ten financial abuse victims will turn to Medicaid as a direct result of their own monies being stolen from them.<sup>6</sup>
- Financial abuse by itself costs older Americans more than \$2.6 billion dollars annually.<sup>7</sup>
- The direct medical costs of injuries are estimated to contribute more than \$5.3 billion to the nation's annual health expenditures.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.napsa-now.org/policy-advocacy/exploitation/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/research/statistics.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://ncea.acl.gov/whatwedo/research/statistics.html>