



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 15, 2020

B.C.'s Seniors Advocate Statement on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2020

Victoria, B.C.—" June 15th was designated World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) by the United Nations in 2011. Today is an opportunity to reflect and to educate ourselves, our seniors, organizations, and policymakers on the realities of elder abuse in our community."

"Elder abuse takes many forms, whether it is psychological, financial, emotional, physical or sexual abuse. We all have a role to play in helping to eliminate elder abuse by educating ourselves on the signs and symptoms of elder abuse and reporting concerns to the appropriate people."

"In addition to a current systemic review of elder abuse and neglect that is currently underway, my office, along with the BC Securities Commission produced an educational video about the signs of financial elder abuse, which includes the mishandling of an older person's money or property and acts of fraud. This is very timely as the challenges of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic may place increased pressure on seniors to financially support family members or as seniors look to new investments during the current uncertainty in the markets."

"My office has also worked with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to launch an awareness campaign to help seniors understand how to protect their privacy online and off, with tips about protecting your personal information. This is particularly important as more seniors turn to the internet during the pandemic for ordering goods and supplies and to communicate with friends and family."

"As the world collectively places their attention upon elder abuse, you will see symbols of supports across the province with purple lights illuminating the Legislature and the WEAAD flag flown in Victoria, people wearing purple clothing or donning purple ribbons. Today, I encourage you to educate yourself about elder abuse and to know how to report it. Elder abuse is preventable, and everyone has a role to play."

View the financial elder abuse video <https://vimeo.com/429153502>

View the privacy brochure for seniors https://www.oipc.bc.ca/media/17317/privacy-tips-for-seniors-brochure_oipc_seniors-advocate.pdf

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BACKGROUND

Identifying Elder Abuse

The abuser is often a spouse or partner, family member (often adult child), caregiver, friend, or a trusted person in the senior's life. Financial abuse is often accompanied by other forms of abuse, such as emotional abuse, physical abuse, or denial of rights.

Specific signs of financial abuse may include:

- the senior not having sufficient cash for their daily expenses
- the senior not knowing the details of their financial position or being evasive about it when questioned
- adult children living with the senior with no visible means of support
- the senior having paid for goods and services which they do not need

Reporting Financial Elder Abuse

Elder Financial abuse can be reported to the following agencies.

- **RCMP/Local Police**
- **BC Securities Commission**
Telephone: 1-800-373-6393 (toll free) or 604-899-6854
Email: inquiries@bcsc.bc.ca
Website: www.investright.org
- **Consumer Protection BC**
Website: <https://www.consumerprotectionbc.ca/consumer-help/>
Telephone: 1 888-564-9963
- **Seniors First BC**
Telephone: 1-866-437-1940 (toll-free) or 604-437-1940
Website: <http://seniorsfirstbc.ca/>
Seniors Abuse & Information Line (SAIL):
TTY: 604-428-3359 TTY Teletype for the deaf
- **Regional Health Authorities**
Their role as designated agency is to respond to all types of seniors' abuse.
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/partners/health-authorities/regional-health-authorities>
- **Government of BC – Scams and Frauds**
Website: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/seniors/financial-legal-matters/scams-and-fraud>