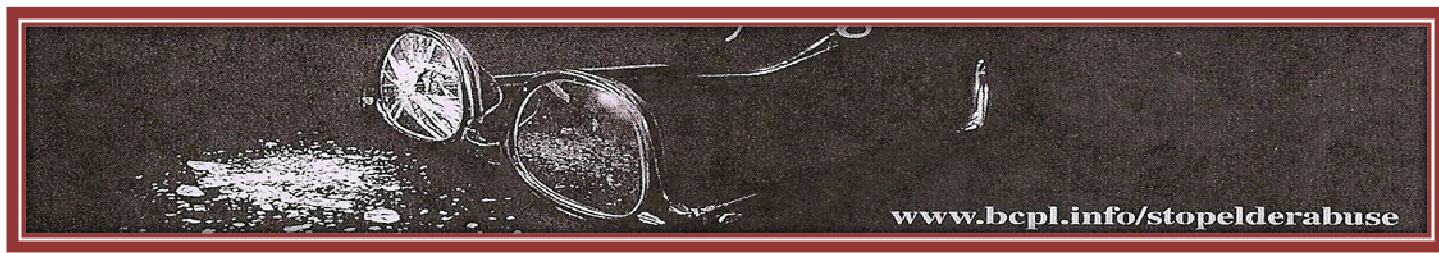


ELDER ABUSE IS A CRYING SHAME!



A NEWSLETTER OF THE BALTIMORE COUNTY RESTORING ELDER SAFETY TODAY

January, 2011

What is BC-Rest?

Elder Abuse Coalition, Baltimore County Restoring Elder Safety (BC-REST) is a coalition working to educate and empower the community to identify and prevent elder abuse in the county through education, advocacy and resource development.

The coalition has representatives from many county departments including: Aging, State's Attorney's Office, Social Services, Health, Public Library, Police and Fire, as well as local organizations, businesses and service providers.

To learn more about BC-REST visit:

www.bcpl.info/stopelderabuse

NEW DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAW PROTECTS RENTERS

Susan Tannenbaum, Legal Aid Bureau Senior Attorney and member of the Safe Homes Coalition, discussed the new Domestic Violence Law (House Bill 1382) at BC-REST's October meeting.

The law, which passed both houses of the Maryland legislature unanimously, is a 3-part act that provides protection against eviction for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault who live in rental housing.

1) Getting Out of Their Lease-a victim can end their lease early if they are a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault who needs to move for their own safety and have either a protective order or a peace order. They have to give their landlord 30 days written notice prior to ending their lease and a copy of their court order and pay their rent for the 30 days.

2) Changing Their Locks-the landlord is required to change the locks if the resident is a victim of domestic violence and has a protective order, or if the resident is a victim of sexual assault and has a peace order. The landlord must be asked in writing to change the locks and provided with a copy of the order. The landlord must change the locks by the end of the next business day and may charge a reasonable fee for changing the locks.

3) Eviction Defense-if a landlord tries to evict a victim of an incident of domestic violence or sexual assault, the victim should go to court and tell the judge what happened and give the judge the protective order or peace order. If the victim does not have a protective order or peace order they should tell the judge that they are a victim of domestic violence or sexual assault and give any proof of the domestic violence or sexual assault to the judge. The law requires the judge to consider any evidence about domestic violence or sexual assault in eviction cases.

A Voice For Elder Justice

Robert Blancato, BA, MPA, President, Matz, Blancato & Associates, was the Keynote Speaker at a professional conference entitled, "Safeguarding the Golden Years: Working Together to Prevent Elder Abuse," sponsored by the Baltimore County Consortium for Professional Education in the Field of Aging on December 2, 2010.

Mr. Blancato focused on the passage of the Elder Justice Act, signed by President Obama as part of the Health Care Reform bill, H.R. 3590. Mr. Blancato reported that there are 5 million people who are victims of Elder Abuse, typically an older woman who lives alone and is between 75 and 80.

The Act will provide a dedicated funding stream to Adult Protective Services. It includes provisions for: (1) an Elder Justice Coordinating Council, (2) Grants to establish and operate forensic centers, (3) Grants for long-term care and establishments for training /certification, enhancement of care, Electronic Health Record (EHR) technology, (4) Adult Protective Services, (5) Long term care Ombudsman program grants & training, (6) Complaint Investigation Systems and (7) A study on establishing a National Nurse Aide Registry. A total of \$777 million needs to be appropriated for the above.

Now that the bill has passed it is imperative to get the funds and secure it for the future. We will report in future issues about the efforts to get funding for the Elder Justice Act.

Who is mandated to report of Elder Abuse in the state of Maryland?

Maryland law requires that law enforcement agents, human service professionals and health care practitioners report any suspected cases of elder abuse.

Can I Report Elder Abuse?

Anyone who witnesses or suspects any cases of elder abuse should report it immediately.

How Do I Report Elder Abuse?

Contact 911 or the local sheriff.

To report suspected abuse in the community or an Assisted Living Facility call:

Baltimore County Department of Social Services – Adult Protective Services - #410-853-3000 – *make a language selection, then press #2 for adult services.*

To report suspected abuse in a nursing home call:

Baltimore County Long Term Care Ombudsman - #410-887-4200

For information about elder abuse call:

Baltimore County Department of Aging - #410-887-2594

TTY for hearing impaired call: Maryland Relay 711

Physical Abuse

It is all too common for senior citizens to be physically abused. Unfortunately, someone that a senior knows personally and/or depends on for support is often the perpetrator of this type of abuse. Physical abuse is defined as the use of force to injure a vulnerable elder. This can be excessive force that causes unnecessary injury or pain including: *hitting, burning, biting, slapping, shoving, shaking, pushing, kicking or severe beatings.* Physical abuse also includes: *restraining with ropes or chains or straps for an extended period of time or in an inappropriate manner.* It can also include such acts against the older person as: *over or under medicating, depriving the elder of food, or exposing the person to severe weather.*

Some obvious signs of physical abuse are bruises, black eyes, broken bones, burns and untreated injuries. Additionally, the elder's own report of abuse should always be taken seriously and evaluated. A caretaker's refusal to allow visitors may also be a red flag for abuse.

SAVE -THE -DATE!

FOCUS ON SAFETY DAYS

- ◆ Arbutus Sr. Center – April 9, 2011
- ◆ Ateaze Sr. Center – Nov. 5, 2011
- ◆ Parkville Sr. Center – June 4, 2011
- ◆ Reisterstown Sr. Center – July 16, 2011

Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15, 2011

TYPES OF ELDER ABUSE

Physical Abuse – Use of force to threaten or physically injure a vulnerable elder.

Emotional Abuse – Verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling acts that cause mental anguish, pain, or distress to a senior.

Sexual Abuse – Sexual contact that is forced, tricked, threatened, or otherwise coerced upon a vulnerable elder, including anyone who is unable to grant consent.

Exploitation – Theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority, and use of undue influence as a lever to gain control over an older person's money or property.

Neglect – A caregiver's failure or refusal to provide for a vulnerable elder's safety, physical, or emotional needs.

Abandonment – Desertion of a frail or vulnerable elder by anyone with a duty of care.

Self Neglect – An inability to understand the consequences of one's own actions or inaction, which leads to, or may lead to, harm or endangerment.

Remember: You do not need to prove that abuse is occurring; it is up to the professionals to investigate the suspicions.

Source: www.ncea.aoa.gov

Elder Abuse Data and Statistics

According to the Elder Abuse Daily website, www.ElderAbuseDaily.com, a February 15, 2010 article documents that there are nearly 6 million cases of elder abuse every year. That's approximately one case every five seconds. *Unfortunately, many of these cases will go unreported.* You can make a difference! **Reporting suspected abuse could save a life!**