



Gatekeepers are people who come into contact with elders and other vulnerable adults through their jobs and everyday activities. They are crucial eyes and ears in our community, a vital means of finding those most at risk of abuse.

May 2012

Dear Gatekeeper Readers:
May is Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in California! Join us in making an extra effort to increase awareness and help prevent elder abuse. Some of the ways you might participate are:



- Strike up a conversation with friends and family about elder abuse prevention.
- Check on your aging family members and neighbors.
- Share your copy of the Gatekeeper with a colleague.
- Attend a Multidisciplinary Team meeting
- Schedule an elder abuse training courtesy of The Elder Abuse Prevention program (EAP) by contacting Herschell Larrick at EAP@ioaging.org

Learn more:

www.ag.ca.gov/bmfea/pdfs/citizens_guide.pdf

www.SFEAFC.org

Together, we can end elder abuse.

As always, thank you for reading and contributing to the Gatekeeper eNewsletter.

Two quick reminders: [Links now look like this](#), and you can follow us on Twitter to receive daily news feeds about elder abuse issues:



Warmly,

Herschell Larrick, Admin. Assistant, Elder Abuse Prevention
Mary Grant, Volunteer, Institute on Aging
Ailene Cofino, Intern, Institute on Aging
Talitha Guinn, Director, Elder Abuse Prevention

Dispatches from the Field



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Gatekeeper Submissions

Gatekeeper eNewsletter is published quarterly by Institute on Aging, Elder Abuse Prevention Program.

Want to include your event in our next publication?

Contact us:

eap@ioaging.org
(415) 750-4140 ext. 222

www.ioaging.org
www.sfeafc.org



Gatekeeper Archive

Want to read past issues of the Gatekeeper on-line?

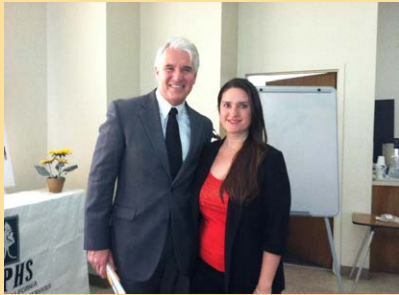
[Click here](#)

Elder Abuse Prevention Program News

May is Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Awareness Month in California. The idea began in San Francisco when the much-admired elder justice advocate, Helen Karr, took on the issue of elder abuse with great determination. Her testimony before the California Legislature in 2005 was instrumental in passing a law that requires financial institutions to report suspected elder financial abuse. Her tireless advocacy also resulted in the legislature designating May as Elder and Dependent Adult Abuse Month in California.



The Elder Abuse Prevention Program (EAP) is dedicated to raising awareness about elder abuse. On May 1, 2010, EAP's Talitha Guinn joined San Francisco District Attorney George Gascón, Nicolas Stathakos of Adult Protective Services, and many others to inaugurate the 2012 Financial Elder Abuse Prevention bus and bus shelter ad campaign.



Look for our Muni public ad campaign all over San Francisco!

For the past three years, EAP has collaborated with members of the San Francisco Elder Abuse Forensic Center on a bus and bus shelter ad campaign. This idea evolved from Forensic Center meetings where it became apparent that several seniors in the Richmond district had been approached at bus stops and targeted for financial exploitation. The posters we produced back then and every year since aim to raise awareness of several types of financial scams targeting seniors in our community.

This year, we expanded the campaign by translating the ad into Russian along with English, Chinese and Spanish, making it culturally relevant and representative of our communities where financial crimes are being perpetrated.

The EAP program would like to thank both Clear Channel and Titan for their generous in-kind donations that will enable us to have twice as many bus shelter and on-board bus ads than we originally hoped. This year, you will see the 660 interior and exterior bus ads in 40 bus shelters all over San Francisco during the month of May.



Special thanks to Susan Lindeman, Noemi Gonzales, Arman Shakhray, Monica Tan, Binh Trinh, and Edith Chan-Lee for translations, proofing, and advice on our multilingual message. Thank you.



In The News

[Antipsychotic Drugs Common in Nursing Homes](#)

Chemical restraint is increasingly used in numerous nursing homes to control behavior, and three seniors in southern California have died as a result--notwithstanding the fact that high doses of psycho-tropic drugs are counterindicated for patients with Alzheimer's. Three nursing home officials at Kern Valley Hospital have been charged with elder abuse resulting in death, nonfatal elder abuse, and assault with a deadly weapon under the state's elder abuse law, which was used in this particular context for the first time.

[Ex-Real Estate Agent Sentenced In SF Mortgage Scheme Targeting Immigrants](#)

A former real estate agent and Christian radio host was sentenced to 15 years in prison on April 6, 2012 for his involvement in a mortgage fraud scheme targeting immigrants and seniors. His 31 victims, all of whom were having problems with mortgage payments were persuaded to either pay cash, sign over title to their homes, or refinance their real estate holdings so that the agent, Edwin Parada, could cash in on the equity. In February he pled guilty to all charges and allegations from the two cases totaling a loss of more than \$2 million.

[New Lawsuits Over Do-It-Yourself IRAs](#)

A class action suit was recently filed in Los Angeles against two

custodians of do-it-yourself, or self-directed investment retirement accounts (IRA'S). The plaintiffs claim they were advised that their investment portfolios were solid when in fact they were not. The Custodial firms administer accounts by providing regular statements to investors as well as by effecting the transfer of money from investors to account managers. Whether or not the case will prevail is unclear since custodians don't impose the investments nor do they charge a fee. This suit, however, highlights growing concern over investment fraud involving older Americans' retirement savings.

[Substance abuse on the rise among boomers](#)

As the baby-boom generation (ages 48 to 66), expands the ranks of an already sizeable older population, substance abuse is on the rise among elders. Tobacco use continues to be the leading addiction among older adults, but abuse of prescription drugs, alcohol, marijuana and other illegal drugs is an often hidden but serious issue. Most older adults, no longer work, might not drive, and might not have family members who could talk to them about any drinking or drug abuse.

[East Bay Elder Court-One of a Kind](#)

While five California counties currently provide elder court services, only Martinez has a court established solely to hear senior cases. The court also provides senior peer counselors to help those seeking redress, including pre- and post-hearing assistance.

[Wednesday, May 9, 2012 KALW Radio: Your Legal Rights Episode on Elder Abuse Awareness](#)

Check out this episode as Chuck Finney, an attorney with the San Mateo District Attorney's office hosts and is joined in a discussion about elder abuse with Lt. Art Stellini, SFPD; Shay Mathews, SFDA office; Cindy Rasmussen, APS; and Andrea Higgins, San Mateo District Attorney's office. They share public resource information and discuss senior legal cases they have worked on; the second half of the show is open to call-in questions from the public.

[Innovative Blueprint for Action](#)

Erika Falk teamed up with Sarah Hooper of the University of California's Hasting Law School as part of the San Francisco Financial Elder Abuse Collaboration to produce a two-page Blueprint for Action outlining the need to increase the system's capacity to respond to financial elder abuse cases.

[Recognize Signs of Self-neglect](#)

Self-neglect occurs when adults can't or don't take care of themselves properly. Some examples might include taking too much medication or skipping doses; not eating, drinking, or buying food; or not going to the doctor when injured or sick for needed medical, dental or vision care. Self-neglect places an already vulnerable adult at risk of serious illness

Fraud and Scam Alerts

[Foreign Lotteries Prompt US Postal Service Warning](#)

While it is illegal for American citizens to enter foreign lotteries, seniors present a tempting target because they often have considerable savings and home equity. Postal officials received over 17,000 complaints in 2010 alone (as opposed to 9,500 in 2009), prompting the agency to place a higher priority on finding the scammers.

Family Scams Very Prevalent

Unless a person is declared incompetent, it is perfectly legal for anyone to give money away. While scams by service providers, mortgage lenders, home aides, etc., are fairly well known, estimates indicate that as much as 60 percent of financial elder abuse is committed by an adult child.

Two Scams Target Elderly Chinese Americans in San Francisco

According to the SFPD, during the past several months there have been a number of reported incidents of two particular scams in San Francisco's Chinese community.

In the blood jade bracelet scam, the victim, who is usually an elderly Chinese woman on her own, is approached by one or two suspects looking for a business. They engage the victim in a conversation about a blood jade bracelet bringing them good luck, and ask if the victim would like to buy it. A third suspect enters conversation, and acknowledges that the bracelet has a high value. Suspects tell the victim the bracelet is worth \$35,000 to \$40,000 and they will sell it to the victim for only \$15,000 to \$16,000. The victim pays, and later discovers that the bracelet is worthless.

In the herbal doctor scam/purified scam, a suspect approaches the victim seeking directions to an herbal doctor. During the conversation, suspect two joins in, tells the victim that a bad spirit is attached to her, and she needs to be purified. A third suspect enters the scene identifying herself as an herbal doctor, and tells the victim she needs to get all her money and jewelry and place it in a bag. The victim gives suspect three a bag containing cash and jewelry, and a ritual is performed. The suspect returns the bag and the victim later discovers only shredded newspaper inside.



Since December 2011, there have been 21 reported cases with three Asian females aged 40-50 as suspects. One case had an Asian male aged 40-50 listed as a suspect. Victims and suspects spoke Cantonese or Mandarin.

A forensic artist has compiled updated sketches of the suspects (see above), and SFPD is asking for the public's help in identifying those involved. Anyone with information about these cases is requested to

contact Inspectors Kim Lewis or Julie Yee of the Financial Crimes Unit at 415-553-1521, provide information anonymously at 415-575-4444, or text a tip at TIP411.

San Francisco police have also established a Limited English Proficiency Tip Line in Cantonese for the public to provide information related to this investigation at 415553-9212 or 1-855-SFPD-TIP. Meanwhile, police are advising residents of the following:

- Use caution when approached by any strangers.
- Do not allow strangers to touch you or your hands.
- Do not speak to strangers offering good fortune or unusual offers.
- Do not give money or valuables to be "purified."

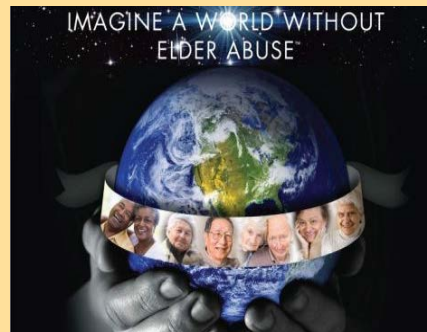
[At press time, SFPD has made three arrests in connection with this scam.](#)

All three are Chinese women who were arrested and charged with multiple counts of grand theft, extortion, and elder financial abuse. Two of them are also being held on out-of-state warrants. At least 25 victims in the city are known to have fallen for the scam, losing hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cash and jewelry. Police are still seeking other victims and more information, so please call the above numbers if you have any information related to this scam.

Spotlight

[World Elder Abuse Awareness Day \(WEAAD\), June 15, 2012](#)

WEAAD was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. To provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of and knowledge about the abuse and



neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect. In addition, WEAAD supports the United Nations International Plan of Action, which acknowledges the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. WEAAD also serves as a call to action for individuals, organizations, and communities to raise awareness and increase knowledge about elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

This year promises to bring us closer to our goal of eradicating elder abuse from the planet. From New York to Mumbai to California, people are pausing to commemorate elders and to address the myriad issues confronting today's and tomorrow's elderly population. With this more powerful level of collaboration, elder abuse prevention is on its way to gaining the awareness and support needed to help elder victims around the world.

Heroes:

[Good Samaritan Helps Scam Victim](#)

Morris McCoy is 81 years of age and a double amputee from Lodi. After release from a local hospital, two women in scrubs toting a small child rang his doorbell stating they were checking on his well-being. After stealing his wallet, police apprehended the scammers at a local store thanks to an observant credit card employee. When DeLois Johnson of Sacramento heard about the incident, she donated a new electric wheel chair and a light-weight aluminum chair to McCoy so he could drive himself around.

Petaluma: World War II Vet Battles Fraud

A 90-year old man evaded falling prey to a financial scam, when a girl posing as a high school student selling magazines to support the school's baseball team tried to convince Petaluma resident, Art Cader to buy magazines totaling \$236. Noting the high cost, he told the girl he needed time to consider the offer. He then called the school, and learned that no such fundraiser was being offered. After contacting several neighbors, Mr. Cader realized the girl had targeted other seniors as well, and he called the police. The incident serves as a reminder to learn to say no and to not give out any personal data such as social security numbers or bank account information.

Legislative & Policy News

Caretaker Theft Triggers Calls for Government Regulation

While state funded in-home care programs require caregiver background checks, fingerprints, and training, private companies are not subject to state regulation, which is why Allison Bragger was allegedly able to steal \$27,000 from her 86-year-old employer with dementia and arthritis. The victim's daughter wants to change the way some 1,200 private in-home care companies do business in California, and subsequently testified in favor of SB 411, which is currently on the inactive list in the state legislature due in part to implementation costs.



Keep Our Courthouses Open

Access to the courts ensures access to justice. Budget cuts threaten to close the courthouse doors and imperil our most fundamental rights. The impact of the court cuts proposed by the governor will drastically affect our vulnerable elder population. Since seniors rely upon the courts to seek remedy and protection from abuse or violence. The prevalence of elder abuse continues to increase, indicating the need for more court protection, not less. Victims of financial and/or physical abuse will have less access, thereby increasing their levels of victimization and decreasing their right to seek redress

Massachusetts Defines Testamentary Capacity

The Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts has defined the standard that must be present when elders sign wills and estate documents, and attorneys must be vigilant in their determination of mental capacity, especially if reduced capacity has already been determined; however, diminished capacity is not an indication of the elder's inability to execute estate documents as long as the elder understands and can "carry in mind...the situation of his property....It requires freedom from delusion" caused by illness that could influence the elder's decisions, as well as the ability to understand the issue at the time documents are signed even though the elder may not remember at a later time.

Calendar of Events

2012

Elder Abuse Prevention (EAP) Program Events

EAP hosts educational and networking meetings detailed below. For further information, please contact the EAP program. eap@ioaging.org or call (415) 750-4111 x221

Elder Abuse Prevention Trainings

EAP is available to provide in-service training on topics of elder abuse, neglect, and mandated reporting.

Information: email eap@ioaging.org or call (415) 750-4111 x221

January	February	March
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
April	May	June
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July	August	September
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October	November	December
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☞ New Year Day	☞ Memorial Day	☞ Veterans Day
☞ New Year Day observed	☞ Independence Day	☞ Veterans Day observed
☞ Martin Luther King Day	☞ Labor Day	☞ Thanksgiving Day
☞ Presidential Day	☞ Columbus Day (observed)	☞ Christmas Day

Multidisciplinary Team Meeting (MDT)

Professionals from the fields of aging meet to review complex elder and dependent adult abuse cases and to learn about new services and resources. Since our meetings have merged with the San Francisco Elder Abuse Forensic Center case review meeting, our members now include community service providers, a psychologist, a psychiatrist, and a geriatrician, as well as representatives from Adult Protective Services, the San Francisco Police Department, the Public Guardian, and the DA's office. If you are a service provider dealing with a difficult case of elder abuse, feel free to contact us. We will consult with you to determine if presenting your case at the next MDT may be of benefit to you and your client.

- When:** Thursday, July 19, 2012 - 1:30-3:00 PM (PT)
Thursday, September 6, 2012 - 1:30-3:00 PM (PT)
Thursday, November 1, 2012 - 1:30-3:00 PM (PT)
Thursday, December 20, 2012 - 1:30-3:00 PM (PT)

Where: 1650 Mission St., 4th floor, San Francisco, CA 94103

Institute on Aging (IOA) Events

IOA's Education Department provides numerous professional trainings, seminars, and continuing education (CEU) credits opportunities each year.

For more information go to: <http://education.ioaging.org>.

Issues Facing LGBT Seniors and Resources to Help

Presenters: Cristina Flores, PhD, Director of Research and Education, Institute on Aging; Rick Appleby, Intake and Referral Manager, Institute on Aging; and Michelle Alcedo, Director of Education and Outreach, Openhouse San Francisco.

- When:** Thursday, June 7, 2012 - 3:00 PM - 4:30 PM (PT)
Where: Institute on Aging, 3575 Geary Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94118
[View event details](#)

Hospice and Palliative Care

Presenter: Nate Hinerman, PhD, University of San Francisco

- When:** Thursday, August 2, 2012 - 3:00 - 4:30 PM (PT)
Where: 3575 Geary Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94118

[View event details](#)

Meet Willie Mays!

Join IOA for an autograph signing event with baseball legend Willie Mays. Proceeds benefit IOA services for older adults, including homecare, social day programs, geriatric assessment services and affordable health care. Bring items to be autographed!

When: Friday, June 1, 2012 - 3:00 - 5:30 PM (PT)

Where: Pete's Tavern: 128 King Street, San Francisco, CA

[View Event Details](#)

Other Community Events

Please contact event host individually for more details.

LGBT Community Partnership:

A grassroots collaboration of service providers, consumers, and advocates working to ensure quality services for LGBT seniors and people with disabilities. Contact: Rick Appleby 415-404-9440

rick.appleby@lgbtcommunitypartnership.org

When: Thursday, June 21, July 19, & May 17 - 3 PM - 5:00 PM (PT)

Where: LGBT Community Center

1800 Market St, San Francisco, CA 94102

[View event details](#)

The Legacy Film Festival on Aging:

Showcases the best films from around the world in celebration of the challenges and triumphs of older adulthood..

When: Friday, July 6 - Sunday, July 8, 2012

Where: Viz Cinema, 1746 Post St, San Francisco, CA 94115

[View event details](#)

Elder Abuse Resources

The EAP has compiled a list of resources that we find valuable when working on issues of elder abuse. While this is not an exhaustive list, we hope you will find it useful.

[Click here to view resources](#)



Recently added resource:

[Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#)

CFPB is a new agency under the aegis of the Federal Trade Commission created as a result of Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. The agency is responsible for oversight of consumer financial institutions, including banks, securities firms, and credit card companies, to name a few, with an emphasis on mortgages, credit cards, and student loans. The agency's Office for Older Americans is a special unit for seniors 62 years of age and older to help elders make sound financial decisions.

If you have resources that you would like to see added to this list, please email Herschell at hlarrick@ioaging.org.

Institute on Aging
3575 Geary Boulevard
415-750-4111 | www.IOAging.org