



PUBLIC GUARDIAN  
AND TRUSTEE OF  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## **BACKGROUND: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day**

### What is the Origin of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day?

In Madrid in April 2002, countries throughout the world adopted the United Nations International Plan of Action on Aging. The Plan of Action recognized the importance of addressing and preventing abuse and neglect of older adults and identified that mistreatment of older adults was a violation of internationally recognized human rights. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) introduced the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day to support the Madrid Plan of Action on Aging. The INPEA is working with interested individuals, agencies, organizations, non-governmental organizations, governments and businesses throughout the world to promote this special day.

### What is Elder Abuse?

Abuse of elderly or senior adults refers to actions that harm an older person or jeopardize the person's health or welfare.

According to the World Health Organization, abuse and neglect of senior adults can be a single or a repeated act. It can occur in any relationship where there is an expectation of trust or where a person is in a power or authority.

Abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, financial, sexual, or spiritual. Some types of seniors' abuse involve violation of their rights. Financial abuse is considered to be the most common form of abuse to seniors.

Neglect can be part of abuse. Neglect involves not doing something such as not providing the older person with food, shelter, medication, or care.

Self-neglect is any failure of an adult to take care of him/herself that causes, or is reasonably likely to cause, within a short period of time, serious physical or mental harm or substantial damage or loss in respect to financial affairs.

### Proclamation

The Provincial Cabinet issued a Proclamation to recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day for the third year in a row.

The Public Guardian and Trustee of BC supports the Proclamation.

## What are Canadians Doing?

This day is a time to share information, learn more, discuss the issue of abuse of older adults, and become involved. Canada has been recognized internationally as a leader in raising public awareness of abuse of older adults and in developing innovative and respectful approaches to dealing with the issue.

The Public Guardian and Trustee of BC as well as provincial, regional and local community response networks are holding many special activities in recognition of the day.

The Public Guardian and Trustee of BC and others are marking World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15th as an opportunity to recognize local and regional efforts that are being made to raise awareness of abuse of older adults.

## Law Reform

In 2007, the BC Legislature passed legislation to modernize provisions relating to adult guardianship and admission to health care facilities. If proclaimed, Bill 29 – *Adult Guardianship and Planning Statutes Amendment Act, 2007* will amend the following statutes: *Public Guardian and Trustee Act*, *Adult Guardianship Act*, *Representation Agreement Act* and *Power of Attorney Act*. Together with the care facilities admission legislation, these amendments would substantially complete modernization of the statutory framework governing incapable adults.

If you know someone who is experiencing abuse, neglect or self neglect, please contact:

### **Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia**

Vancouver (604) 660-4444

Victoria (250) 356-8160

Kelowna (250) 712-7576

To contact the office toll-free, call Service BC (1-800-663-7867) and ask to be transferred to the Public Guardian and Trustee.

### **Health and Seniors' Information Line**

1-800-465-4911

### **BC Coalition to Eliminate Abuse of Seniors (BCCEAS)**

1-866-437-1940 or in Vancouver (604) 437-1940

**VictimLINK** 1-800-563-0808

**Crime Stoppers** 1-800-222-TIPS (8477)

## **About the Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia:**

The Public Guardian and Trustee of British Columbia provides services to approximately 32,000 clients and manages more than \$700 million in trust assets. Its mandate is to serve adults who require assistance in decision-making through the protection of their legal rights, financial interests and personal care interests, children and youth by protecting their legal and financial interests and heirs and beneficiaries of deceased.

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