

**CCoA**  
California Commission on Aging

# AGEWATCH

## California names June as Elder Abuse Awareness Month in the state

Advocates for seniors are holding special events and educational opportunities this month to heighten awareness of elder abuse during California's **Elder Abuse Awareness Month** recognition. Approved by the State Legislature this week, Assembly Concurrent Resolution 71 was introduced by Assemblymember Bill Dodd of Napa with joint sponsorship of the California Commission on Aging and the California Elder Justice Coalition. ACR 71 was approved by the Assembly on June 8 and moved to the Senate for vote.

California serves an estimated 15% of the nation's Adult Protective Service (APS) clients, with as many 10,000 reports of elder and dependent adult abuse received every month by APS programs across the state. Approximately one in nine older adults has been abused, neglected or exploited in the past year.

Current estimates suggest that only one in 14 cases of elder and vulnerable adult abuse is reported, including fewer than one in 25 incidents of financial abuse, due to victims' feelings of shame, hopelessness, intimidation or fear.

Elderly and dependent adult victims of abuse face a greater risk of impacting the social service system. Elder Financial Abuse Victims often become nursing home

residents that are dependent upon Medi-Cal, exacting a heavy toll on public resources. Often these victims have a mortality rate three times that of the general public and are 300 percent more likely to die a premature death.

Traditionally recognized each May, California advocates opted to recognize EAA Month in June to correspond with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which is June 15th. To read California's Elder Abuse Awareness Month resolution, visit [http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab\\_0051-0100/acr\\_71\\_bill\\_20150514\\_introduced.htm](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/15-16/bill/asm/ab_0051-0100/acr_71_bill_20150514_introduced.htm). To learn more about World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, visit <http://www.acl.gov/newsroom/observances/WEAAD/index.aspx>.

AGE WATCH is an occasional publication of the California Commission on Aging (CCoA) intended to inform, educate, and advocate. The CCoA is an independent state agency established in 1973 to serve as the principal state advocate on behalf of older Californians. The CCoA office is located at 1300 National Drive, Suite 173, Sacramento, CA 95834.

## Budget Conference Committee approves increases for Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Caregiver Resource Centers; repeals 7% IHSS hours cut

The Joint Legislative Budget Conference Committee met Tuesday, acting on a number of requests to increase budget allocations for Health and Human Service programs serving primarily the aged and persons with disabilities. Chaired by Senator Mark Leno (San Francisco), the Conference Committee makes the final determination on budget recommendations that were not include in both houses' version of the 2015-2016 budget.

One of the most notable decisions was the Conferees' approval of \$6.4 million to increase funding for Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs across the state. Consisting of \$1.4 million from the skilled nursing home licensing and certification fee account and \$5 million in General Fund dollars, the increase fulfills the California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Association's long-term goal of bringing program funding back to pre-recession levels.

Other increases approved by the Conference Committee include an \$3.8 million to partially restore Caregiver Resource Center funding cut in 2009, adequate funding to cover In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) overtime along with restoring 7% that was cut in IHSS provider hours through the 2014-2015 budget. The Committee made a partial concession on requests to increase SSI/SSP grants, proposing a \$10 monthly increase for individual recipients beginning in 2016, as well as restoring cost of living adjustments to the state portion of the grant in 2020.

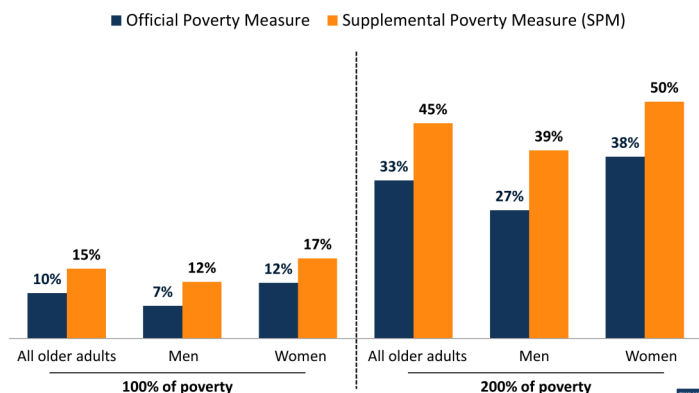
Advocates hoping for an increase in Adult Protective Services training funds, restoration of funding for home and community-based services and restoration of Medi-Cal optional benefits eliminated in 2009 will have to redouble their efforts for the next budget year.

*Information from CDCAN REPORT (JUN 9 2015): Budget Conference Committee Approves Many Increases But Less Than What Advocates Pushed For - Governor Likely To Oppose*

## New research finds nearly half of senior incomes fall beneath the Supplemental Poverty Measure

Figure 3

**The 2013 poverty rate was higher among women than men ages 65 and older, under both the official measure and the SPM**



SOURCE: Kaiser Family Foundation analysis of Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

A new report from the Kaiser Family Foundation finds approximately 45% of adults age 65 and older live below the Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM). Published this week, the research finds that poverty rates increase with age, with 36% of those age 65 to 69 living in poverty, increasing to 57% of those age 80 and older.

The findings match increases shown under the official poverty level, which is widely believed to underestimate the true costs of basic living expenses. Under both measures, poverty levels are also higher for women, those in poor health, and for Hispanics and blacks.

The SPM was developed by the U.S. Census Bureau to more accurately reflect the cost of living based

on regional trends, current basic living expenses, available public benefits and other factors. To read the KFF brief or the full report, visit <http://kff.org/report-section/poverty-among-seniors-issue-brief/> Cubanski, Casillas and Damico. *Poverty Among Seniors: An Updated Analysis of National and State Level Poverty Rates Under the Official and Supplemental Poverty Measures*. Kaiser Family Foundation, Jun 10, 2015.

## Ageism: a hot topic...

### How do we change Americans' view of aging?

A new report from the Frameworks Institute considers the cultural understandings and assumptions Americans share about aging. *Gauging Aging: Mapping the Gaps Between Expert and Public Understandings of Aging in America* reveals that efforts to meet the needs of an expanding aging population are hampered by “a set of decidedly negative and deterministic models about the aging process, as well as powerful understandings that contribute to an overall sense of fatalism about what can be done.” The findings are intended to help develop a communications strategy that leads to a more productive view of the aging process, and ultimately, to public policy that better responds to older adults and their needs.

To read the full report, visit [http://www.afar.org/docs/Gauging\\_Aging.pdf](http://www.afar.org/docs/Gauging_Aging.pdf)

Information from The Frameworks Institute at <http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/>.



### Competency assessments being considered for older physicians

A new report from the American Medical Association is recommending competency assessments of the nation's physicians over age 75. A similar policy in place at the Stanford Health Center has drawn an outcry from senior physicians employed at the prestigious facility, who assert there is no evidence that age impairs their clinical abilities. Profiled this week in the San Jose Mercury news, the Stanford doctors believe “their decades of experience make them more confident and compassionate,” and express their own concerns about younger doctors.

According to the AMA, the number of physicians age 65 and over now totals 240,000 – one-quarter of the nation's doctors. In response, the practice of assessing older doctors is growing across the nation, including here in California, where guidelines for age-based physician screening were published this spring. National AMA delegates will vote on the proposed screening policy this week. To read the full article, visit [http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci\\_28277796/stanford-doctors-fight-age-related-test-fitness](http://www.mercurynews.com/california/ci_28277796/stanford-doctors-fight-age-related-test-fitness).

Excerpted from San Jose Mercury News, June 9, 2015. “Stanford doctors fight age-related test of fitness to practice”

## ***We've Come Too Far to be Treated This Way***



*Seniors and Aging in Society Today* was the theme of a recent event jointly sponsored by the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission (HRC) and the Riverside Office on Aging. Panelists Michele Haddock of the Riverside Office on Aging and Sandi Fitzpatrick (CCoA) discussed the impacts of ageism and its effects on public policy.

Pictured at left are (L - R) Kimberly Barraza, Office of Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia; Dee Dee Wilson-Barton, Chair, Palm Springs HRC; Jack Newby, HRC; Suzanne Severin of HRC, Fitzpatrick and Haddock.

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**Increase Victim Services***Guest editorial*

By Molly Davies, Vice President of Elder Abuse Prevention

and Ombudsman Services at WISE & Healthy Aging



Services for elder abuse survivors are akin to an unfinished haphazardly executed quilt. Some squares made of fine silk, others threadbare cotton, and still so many others with squares missing completely. Services are unique to each community and vary greatly even within a single county. When I think about services for survivors of elder abuse I am struck by two things; how anemic the range of services are, and that the needs of survivors are a confluence of aging network services (e.g. meals and case management) and those that would be viewed as more traditional victim services (e.g. shelter and counseling).

For survivors of financial exploitation, neglect, physical, and sexual abuse, a good outcome is often seen in the context of success for a member of the elder justice intervention network and not from the survivor's perspective. It is shocking that survivors of every type of elder abuse are not provided access to counseling services to process the feelings associated with being victimized.

**Service Needs.** The survivor must be at the center of service creation and delivery; every community must have emergency shelters that accommodate the needs of older adults, including wheel chair access and assistance with activities of daily living; access to and reimbursement sources for individual and group counseling services for survivors; legal services to assist with restraining orders, to change powers of attorney, to assist with debt recovery, and pro-per conservatorship clinics; research on the effectiveness of interventions; elder courts; case managers co-located at police stations to provide desperately needed social services to victims; benefits enrollment centers to conduct benefits checkups and apply for food stamps, and other entitlements; door through door transportation services; low to no cost personal money management to pay bills; resources to help pay for one time veterinary bills or sheltering for pets; peer support programs for those who are at continued risk for being scammed, and relocation costs.

**Opportunities for Change:** The (federal) Crime Victim Fund was increased earlier this year to \$2.6 billion, that is a 350% increase from past funding levels, and it will take the voices of survivors, their families, service providers, legislators and policy makers to advocate for resources to be allocated to services so desperately needed by elder abuse survivors.

Excerpted with permission from the National Center on Elder Abuse, *NCEA WEAAD Blog Series (Week 9) Victim Services*. <http://archive.aweber.com/awlist3672583>

**AGEWATCH****June 2015****Upcoming Events**

June 15, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Event listings at <http://www.acl.gov/NewsRoom/Observances/WEAAD/Events/Event-Lookup.aspx>

June 16 - 17, 2015 – California Commission on Aging, Gary and Mary West Senior Wellness Center, San Diego. [www.ccoa.ca.gov](http://www.ccoa.ca.gov) for agenda and information.

June 17, 2015. *Fleeced: Speaking Out Against Senior Financial Abuse*. 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m. Arden-Dimick Library, Sacramento. Elder Financial Protection Network at 415-956-5556

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