



# El Dorado County Elder Protection Unit

A Team Approach



# Background

- In November of 2000, the Elder Abuse Protection Council (EAPC) was established: a collaborative effort of the Courts, Law Enforcement, Health and Human Services, Financial Institutions, and Healthcare agencies.
- The Council promotes education, better coordination of existing services, and prevention of seniors “falling through the cracks.”

## Elder Abuse Protection Council Provides

- Community Outreach
  - Legislative Efforts
    - Training of the Public and Law Enforcement
      - Protection of Elders through Referrals and Action

# Outgrowth of EAPC

- **Citizen Advocates for the Protection of Elders - C.A.P.E.**

Volunteers assess the needs of seniors and assist in referrals and protection of those who are vulnerable.

- **Home of Elder Abuse Response Team - H.E.A.R.T.**

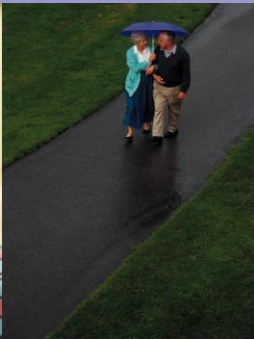
A co-location of Human Services Programs dedicated to ensure timely identification of and early intervention for victims of abuse and/or neglect.



# H.E.A.R.T. Includes

- Public Guardian
- Multipurpose Senior Service Program (MSSP)
- Linkages
- Adult Protective Services (APS)
- Information & Assistance (I & A)
- In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS)
- Senior Legal Services
- Long Term Care Ombudsman

*Providing Valuable Services to Senior Citizens and Disabled Adults*



District Attorney



Human Services-  
Social Services



## **Elder Protection Unit**

**Diverse Departments Brought Together**

Human Services-  
Community Services



County Counsel



# Elder Protection Unit



The Elder Protection Unit (EPU) created by the Board of Supervisors to ensure the protection of our County's most vulnerable seniors and to consolidate services in providing a continuum of care for our senior citizens.

# Resources Added - 2006

- 1- Deputy District Attorney
- 1- Deputy County Counsel
  - 1 - Investigator
  - 1- Support Staff
- 1 - Attorney, Senior Legal Services

Centralized coordination of task force, providing more aggressive enforcement of elder protection laws, faster response to complaints, and increased level of service to seniors in need.



# Mission of Elder Protection Unit

To ensure the safety and well-being of our elders by protecting them from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, seeing that their basic needs are met, and prosecuting those who bring harm.





# EPU Goals

- Safeguard Seniors
- Inform and Educate
- Prosecute Crimes
- Recover Assets



# Elders Under Attack

- Every 10 seconds a senior in California is a victim of financial abuse
- Only 1 in 14 instances of elder abuse or neglect is reported
- Only 1 in 100 instances of elder financial abuse is reported
- Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of some form of abuse.
- 1 out of every 20 adults over the age of 65 are victims of some form of elder abuse.



# Why is the Elder Protection Unit Important to El Dorado County?

*Based on National Statistics:*

- In 2005, 31,517 seniors were reported living in El Dorado County
- A projected 1,600 people over the age of 65 may be victimized in El Dorado County, yet only 320 cases will be reported.
- By 2020, it is projected that 58,629 seniors will be living in El Dorado County, an increase of 86%
- The senior population growth rate in El Dorado County is more than 2x greater than the State of California's growth rate

Educate

Investigate

Prosecute

## A Team Approach

# Elder Abuse Indicators

## **Isolation**

No longer has relationships with long time friends and/or family

## **New Friends**

Has a new “best” friend

## **Changes in Spending Patterns**

Purchases expensive items out of character and

.....not purchasing necessary items, such as: health  
.....care products, adequate food, etc.

## **Discontinues Needed Services**

Housekeeping, Home Health Care, Pest Control

## **Major Life Changes**

New Doctor, New Phone Number, New Financial Planner or Bank,  
Recent Estate Planning changes in favor of “new best friend



# County Counsel - Present

- Increase of 300% in civil cases in process, seeking asset recovery on behalf of conservatees of the Public Guardian's Office
- Increased support provided to Adult Protective Services and Public Guardian's Office in investigation, evaluation, and preparation of cases for referral, recovery, and/or prosecution.
- Training
- Research and development of new approaches and programs benefiting seniors in need.



# Elder Abuse and Neglect: Civil Scenarios

- Elderly woman with substantial assets is befriended by caretaker. Caretaker becomes “new best friend”. Caretaker exercises undue influence and convinces senior to give ALL of her property to caretaker, leaving nothing for herself. Senior now needs nursing home care and has no assets to pay for it.
- Elderly woman gets “sweepstakes” notification from a car dealership, goes to business to “check her prize.” Four hours later, she has paid double the blue book value for a used car which doesn’t even make it around the block. Car dealership won’t take car back. Senior Legal Services intervenes with a civil lawsuit; car loan is canceled, dealership takes car back, and senior receives \$19,000 in settlement.



# Senior Legal Services

The purpose of the Legal Services Program is to deliver high quality, cost effective services designed to address the unmet legal needs of vulnerable seniors in El Dorado County.



## Services Offered:

- Legal Consultation
- Estate Planning
- Wills and Trusts
- Durable Powers of Attorney
- Debt and Consumer Issues
- Real Estate Sales and Easements
- Notary Services
- Referral to other services, as needed

- ✓ Approximately 3,500 phone calls since 01/07
- ✓ 235 new clients (typically couples) since 01/07



# Senior Legal Services



## **Outreach**

Senior Legal provides a Lawyer at the South Lake Tahoe Senior Center the 1st Tuesday of each month and in the El Dorado Hills Senior Center the 2nd Tuesday.

## **Senior Legal Lectures**

Lectures are held throughout the year and are presented by both Attorneys. Lectures include: Estate Planning, Scams, Frauds, Identity Theft, and Reverse Mortgages.

## **Donations**

Donations average \$2000.00 - \$3000.00 per month

# District Attorney 2005-Present

- Increase of 188% in elder criminal cases filed, since formation of EPU
- Board of Supervisors and District Attorney respond to the increased need and expand the EPU to the Elder and Consumer Protection Unit
  - Deputy District Attorney
  - Forensic Auditor
  - 2.0 District Attorney Investigators
  - Legal Secretary
- Increased Investigation and Prosecution of Consumer Fraud

