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FISCAL NOTE

No. 6
 Bill Version: CS SB 3 (JUD)
 (S) Publish Date: 4/15/91

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL 1

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected Health and Social Services
 Title: An Act relating to protection of BRU: Family Services
elderly persons from harm. Component: All components
 Sponsor: Kerttula
 Requestor: Senate Judiciary COMPONENT SERIAL NO. _____ 0254

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY92	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CAPITAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
REVENUE	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: **NONE**

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Implementation of the provisions of this committee substitute for Senate Bill No. 3 will have no fiscal impact on the Division of Family and Youth Services.

Prepared by: Michael L. Price, Director
 Division: Family and Youth Services

Phone: 465-3170
 Date: 4/12/91

Approved by Commissioner: Tommy Branstetter for
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Date: 4/12/91

Distribution (by preparer):
 Legislative Finance OMB
 Legislative Sponsor Impacted Agency(ies)
 Requestor

**STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

BILL NO. SB 3

Revision Date: January 21, 1991 Department Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: "An Act relating to protection of elderly person from harm" BRU: Family Services
 Component: Southcentral, Northern, Northwestern, Western & Southeastern
 Sponsor: Kerttula
 Requestor: Senate HESS COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

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Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTUAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

Estimate of current year impact:

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

Implementation of the provisions of this bill would have no fiscal impact on the Division of Family & Youth Services.

Prepared By: Russ Webb, Acting Director Phone: 465-3191
 Division: Family & Youth Services Date: January 28, 1991
 Approved by Commissioner: Theodore A. Mala, MD, MPH
 Agency: Department of Health & Social Services Date: 1/28/91

Distribution (by preparer): Legislative Finance, Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB, & Impacted Agency(ies).



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

P.O. Box V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator Arliss Sturgulewski, Chairman
Senate Health, Education, and
Social Services Committee

FROM: Senator Jay Kerttula

SUBJ: Senate Bill 3 --
Investigation of Elder Abuse

Jay
+ thank you

I appreciate your scheduling Senate Bill 3, relating to the protection of elderly persons from harm.

Alaska Statute 47.24.020 requires the department to investigate reports of elder abuse, interview the elderly person and prepare a written report. The law directs the department to stop the investigation at the elderly person's request.

There are two large gaps in Alaska's ability to effectively protect senior citizens from abuse under AS 47.24.020.

1) termination of investigations after telephone interviews leaves the elderly extremely vulnerable to coercion by their abusers.

2) great delays in investigating reports of abuse leave seniors in abusive situations for an unconscionable period of time. Delays in investigation also result in a tendency on the part of police and emergency room physicians to not report, since they believe that the Division of Family and Youth Services will not respond.

Senate Bill 3 is aimed at helping alleviate the first problem, and I urge the Senate HESS Committee to pass the bill. For your information I have attached some background information on elder

abuse which was contained in report which Legislative Research did at my request. I have also attached a statistical breakdown of the number of clients served by Adult Protective Services, as well as the allegations of harm to adults which are reported to Adult Protective Services.



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

Senate

Committee on Finance

Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

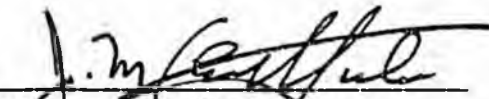
SPONSOR STATEMENT SENATOR JAY KERTTULA

SENATE BILL 3 -- ELDER ABUSE

Alaska Statute 47.24.020 requires the Department of Health and Social Services to investigate reports of elder abuse, interview the elderly person and prepare a written report. The law directs the department to stop the investigation at the elderly person's request.

Senate Bill 3 requires an in-person interview prior to termination of an investigation of elder abuse. While this requirement is implied in existing statute, the long-term care ombudsman has stated that many investigations are currently terminated after telephone interviews. The long-term care ombudsman testified to situations of older Alaskans who were subjected to extended periods of abuse after being coerced by their abuser into requesting termination of investigations over the telephone. Senate Bill 3 clarifies the meaning of "personal interview" which is required by existing statute.

Senate Bill 3 has a "0" fiscal note from the Department of Health and Social Services and is supported by both the administration and the long-term care ombudsman. I urge passage of Senate Bill 3.



Senator Jay Kerttula

ELDER ABUSE BACKGROUND

Nationally, the most common forms of elder abuse are physical abuse (including neglect) and financial exploitation. They are followed by emotional abuse or neglect, and sexual abuse. Elders also are often victims of self-neglect. Elders who are abused physically may be beaten, slapped, cut, burned or shoved; they may be deprived of food, supervision or medical care; they may be sexually abused; or they may be forcibly confined to a bed, a chair or a room. Those who are emotionally abused may be assaulted or threatened verbally. They also may be frightened, humiliated, intimidated, isolated or treated as children.

Profiles of the Typical Victim and Elder Abuser

The typical victim is a frail, 75-year-old woman who cannot care for herself. The victim generally depends on the family or an unrelated person for care and protection. Victims may have a drinking problem and a tendency to take the blame for the abuse. They may be excessively loyal to the caregiver. They may also have a history of abuse and be unpleasant or demanding.

The typical abuser is under stress, has a substance abuse problem, and frequently was abused as a child. Three out of four elder abusers are members of the victim's family. The son of the victim is the most likely abuser, followed by the daughter of the victim.

Data from the National Aging Resource Center on Elder Abuse indicate that two-thirds of the victims in reported cases in 1988 were female. Almost one-third of the abusers were adult children of the abused (30 percent). About 15 percent of abusers were the abused's spouse and about 13 percent were identified as the "service provider." Other reported abusers included friends or neighbors, other relatives, siblings and grandchildren.

Reporting

Most elder abuse is not reported, and this situation is worsening.. In 1980, an estimated one in six cases were reported; in 1985, one in five were reported; and in 1990, one in eight were reported. Nationally, elder abuse is far less likely to be reported than child abuse.

Alaska reports the second highest rate of elder abuse among the 43 states (including Washington, D.C.) with mandatory reporting laws. Alaska reports 9.18 cases of abuse per 1,000 elderly residents. If national estimates hold true for Alaska (one case reported for every eight which occurs), there were about 2,200 actual cases of elder abuse in Alaska in 1988. In that year, 273 cases were reported.

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES CLIENTS

<u>Age</u>	<u>FY 87</u>	<u>FY 88</u>	<u>FY 89</u>
18-59	609	577	568
60 & up	1326	1326	1272
<u>Sex</u>			
Female	1268	1289	1256
Male	666	656	625
<u>Race</u>			
AK Native	792	790	672
Black	58	59	69
Caucasian	1020	1000	
Unknown	65	91	976
			117
<u>Services Turnover</u>			
<u>Clients Exiting</u>			
System in the FY	556	438	445
Clients Began in the FY	301	487	445
Clients Continued thru to the next FY	554	543	569
Clients Interrupted during the FY	87	47	51
Clients Entered and Exited in the FY	437	428	371
<u>Homemaker Services</u>			
Number of Clients	1260	1430	1363
<u>Adult Foster Care</u>			
Number of Clients	27	41	38
<u>Adult Residential Care</u>			
Number of Clients	66	69	70

REPORTS OF HARM

	<u>65 and older</u> (all ages combined)	<u>60-65</u>	<u>18-59</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
FY 84				72
FY 85	137	21	87	245
FY 86	98	39	195	332
FY 87	155	40	122	317
FY 88	275	28	185	488
FY 89	226	39	143	408

Jay Kuttank

ANCHORAGE TIMES May 13, 1990



Elderly remain silent to abuse

Kathy J

By JULIA SOPALSKI
Times Writer

Abuse of the elderly in Alaska is a quiet problem. Its victims mostly are silent. State officials are aware of incidents involving senior citizens, but the extent of the problem is unknown because official reports are never filed, said William O'Connor, an ombudsman for the Older Alaskans Commission. Senior citizens in trouble often are too intimidated to admit they are in an abusive situation, O'Connor said. The Division of Family and Youth Services in 1989 received 265 reports of abuse of adults over 60 years of age, down from 303 in 1988. But O'Connor said the statistics can be misleading because there is not enough money for social workers to follow up and investigate the reports. There may be more than the numbers indicate, he said.

AGE

A mandatory reporting law was passed in Alaska in 1983, requiring health and social workers to report suspected abuse of an elderly person. Failure to do so can result in a fine.

But the report is only recorded in division statistics if a caseworker has time to check it out, O'Connor said.

"I remember a case in the Kenai a few years back where a physician tried for more than six months to report a case of elderly abuse," O'Connor said. "If they won't listen to a physician, what happens when the person calling is only a concerned neighbor?"

The big problem is the shortage of workers in adult protection services, O'Connor said. Across the state, only three social workers are employed full time in adult protection — two in Anchorage and one in Fairbanks. All other caseworkers with the DFYS carry a combined load of child and adult cases.

"With all the children we have being sexually and physically abused, with blood like that running under the door, of course they take priority," he said.

Establishing the prevalence and needs of children in abusive situations is easier, partially because of staff resources, said Pat O'Brien, DFYS social services program officer in Juneau. O'Brien has worked for the agency for 19 years.

Alaska's mandatory reporting law was passed with little funding to back it up, O'Brien said. When the division was deluged with reports of child abuse several years ago, the state cut back

CHILD

on Adult Protective Services, O'Brien said, and the program has never recuperated.

Social workers with Adult Protective Services say working for a child in an abusive situation can be easier than helping a senior in trouble. The social worker can investigate a report of child abuse with or without the agreement of the child or parents.

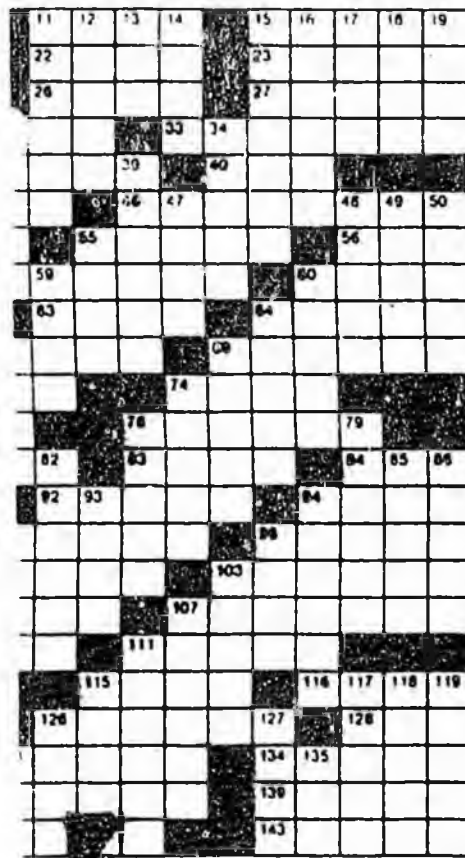
For adults, the social worker is in an advocacy role, said John Burke with the DFYS office in Anchorage. Adults are considered competent to make their own decisions, and an investigation of reported abuse cannot be continued if the suspected victim denies the allegation, he said.

Burke said abuse — the elderly, physical abuse in particular, is not a severe problem in Anchorage. When there is abuse, it often is a result of alcohol or drug abuse and a dysfunctional family setting, the same conditions that give rise to child abuse.

The problem of abuse of the elderly also existed in the past, Burke said, but today there are options allowing senior citizens more control over their situation. The elderly in the Anchorage area inform each other of public health and homecleaning services and gather at the

See Elderly, page C-4

- 11 Fruit
- 12 Amos brand
- 13 Visualize
- 14 Vanities
- 15 Bay
- 16 Strainer
- 17 Church official
- 18 Tote
- 19 Cognizant
- 20 Root vegetable
- 21 Function
- 22 Exam
- 23 Fall to pay a debt
- 24 String toy
- 25 Proclaim
- 26 Supreme being
- 27 Mapped
- 28 Bears couch once
- 29 Discredit falsely
- 30 German river
- 31 Bear mug
- 32 Fry quickly
- 33 Lion hair
- 34 Passover feast
- 35 Pear
- 36 Pepper
- 37 Scribble
- 38 Yugoslavian
- 39 Modest
- 40 Abdominal pain
- 41 English town
- 42 Woody plant
- 43 Linen
- 44 Harbinger
- 45 Strong and
- 46 Seed coat
- 47 Deprivation
- 48 Turn aside
- 49 Cosmologist
- 50 Auditor
- 51 Norman Vincent
- 52 Russian emperor's wife
- 53 Library patron
- 54 Bowling units
- 55 Actress Dahl
- 56 Lacking courage
- 57 Western movie star
- 58 Joan
- 59 Straighten
- 60 Mongolian
- 61 Fervid
- 62 Turmeric
- 63 Singer
- 64 Fitzgerald
- 65 Pell
- 66 New Haven school
- 67 Li Anner
- 68 Creator
- 69 English composer
- 70 Bare
- 71 Young insect
- 72 Robot play
- 73 Arroyo



Very day, at 10 a.m., three vans packed with hot meals begin their daily trips to the homes of house-bound senior citizens scattered from Government Hill to Potter's Marsh.

In April, these Meals On Wheels vans delivered 274 meals.

Judy Moor, regional supervisor of Alaska Management Technologies, oversees 25 homemakers who go out each day to help 120 senior citizens with their laundry, shopping and house cleaning.

These are organizations that provide daily necessities allowing senior citizens to remain independent in their own homes. Without the help, many would be forced to enter nursing homes.

But as these workers and drivers go about their daily routine of providing clean living spaces and nutritious meals, they perform another invaluable task.

"For a lot of these seniors we are the only contact with other people they have on a daily basis. So the drivers become my eyes and ears," said Scott Earl, home-care manager for the Salvation Army.

Moor's business is contracted by the Alaska State Homemaker Program to provide domestic services throughout the state. The homemakers (or Moor's agency) are trained to spot neglect, trouble and possible abuse, she said.

"They tell me if something seems wrong. For example, Mr. Jones had \$5,000 in his account, but it's suddenly gone, and then I can ask a state social worker to check on the senior," she said.

These in-home, community-based services are lifelines for many senior citizens, and both organizations have a waiting list. Social workers and senior advocates believe the services also can be a preventive measure in the area of abuse of the elderly.

Such abuse is a process that builds over a period of time, said John Burke. Burke is an adult-protection social worker for the Division of Family and Youth Services in Anchorage. A young family may decide that a grandparent would be better off living with them, and have all the best intentions, he said.

Elderly

Continued from page C-1

ior centers where they can exchange information.

In-home services available to seniors allow them to live independently and not become dependent on families, or vulnerable to situations that could put them at risk, Burke said.

Ronald Parker, regional manager for DFYS in Nome, has worked for 15 years in social services in rural Alaska. He said he sees very little physical abuse with seniors and actually has recorded a decrease in cases reported to his office. He said the re-emergence of interest in Native cultural values is responsible for the decrease, specifically Native respect for elders.

"There are not enough health and social services available in the villages so people get together and co-operatively provide the help and services their elders need," Parker said. Of the reports received by the office in Nome, which oversees the western section of the state, only two or three a year are substantiated. Those usually are linked to alcohol and substance abuse, Parker said.

But Lare Farmer-Lamm, an adult-protection social worker

who has worked with the division in Fairbanks for seven years, disagreed with Parker's estimate.

"I know from what I hear in the community and on the streets that there is physical abuse out there," she said. "The problem is the same as in the rest of the country. Seniors are ashamed to talk about it."

"Older people don't want to tell on their kids, or they're afraid we'll take them away from their family," Farmer-Lamm said.

Farmer-Lamm said her office often hears about the abuse too late, when the senior is in the hospital and the police have taken the case.

Statistics collected by the Fairbanks office show a slow, but steady, increase in cases of abuse of the elderly, she said. During the first three months of 1985, the office had about 29 clients who were victims. For the same period this year, there are 55 clients.

People are starting to report more incidents, Farmer-Lamm said, but without funding for more field workers to check more reports, collecting statistics is impossible. She is the only adult-protection worker for a large area covering Interior Alaska. She said, for now, the program has to be crisis-oriented, giving the most severe cases priority.

O'Connor agreed with

Farmer-Lamm's estimate of 55 clients. "With help from in-home services or senior day-care, the family is given relief from the stress that comes from the constant care needed by some seniors, or the senior can live independently and not become a burden," Burke said.

Lare Farmer-Lamm, DFYS social worker in Fairbanks, uses in-home services to stabilize homes where she sees an elderly person may be at risk but does not want to leave the family, she said. Workers coming into the home take pressure off the family and can keep an eye on the welfare of the elder.

Older Alaskans Commission ombudsman William O'Connor said there is a need for more of these services. He said additional funding for helping seniors in their own homes would help avoid the larger cost of having these same people in nursing homes. The passage of a bill this year to provide more community based in-home services is a step in the right direction, he said.

"I knew a lady who used to pay her attorney his \$125 an hour fee to come over and change her light bulbs," O'Connor said. A person who is 70 or 80 years old and living alone knows they cannot take the chance of climbing up on a chair to change a light bulb. If they fall, they know they will end up in the hospital and they may wind up staying in the hospital until they are transferred to a nursing home, O'Connor said.

"There are seniors all over town who sit with burned out light bulbs. How much would it cost us to provide that service?" he asked.

If the state spent \$100 a month providing this type of service for senior citizens, allowing them to stay in their own home, the cost would be much less than the \$7,000 or \$8,000 a monthly bill for a nursing home, O'Connor said.

"We're faced with a situation where we have to consider the more preventive approaches," he said. "We're going to run out of funds otherwise."

Farmer-Lamm. As long-term care ombudsman he travels the state investigating complaints concerning senior citizens. He said his focus is on problems of seniors in nursing home facilities, but added that the problem of abuse is not in institutions.

"Our nursing homes and other facilities for seniors are non-profit. This avoids a lot of the problems that occur in homes down below where they must cut corners to make a profit," he said.

The high standards of Alaska's Pioneers Homes are a model for facilities outside Alaska, O'Connor said.

Medicaid reimbursement for nursing home care in Alaska is the highest per diem reimbursement in the nation, and that allows the homes to hire better-qualified staff, he said. That helps make nursing homes in Alaska a safer place to live.

It is the elderly living in private homes that concerns him, O'Connor said.

Sixty percent of the complaints he investigates come from people who live in private residences, he said. When O'Connor has a social worker check out a complaint, the elderly person often is too intimidated to admit they are in an abusive situation.

"They think, 'I should have raised my children better than this,' and don't want to tell on their own kids," O'Connor said.

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responsibility of the majority to govern."

Rep. Dan Glickman, a Democrat from Kansas who was first elected in 1976, believes his colleagues have grown increasingly timid and speculates that the grass-roots firestorm Ronald Reagan stirred up in 1981 "terrorized" Democrats. (He fails to mention that Democrats terror-

Conference renews battle against elder abuse

by Pamela Craves

A new elder abuse task force in Ketchikan is streaming ahead with plans to coordinate services among agencies in provide more help to neglected or abused adults.

Palmer social workers are talking about applying for grants to help abused elders in the Mat-Su Valley.

And the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) has gathered statewide support for a budget increase to add four more social workers in adult protection.

These efforts to beef up services for seniors and vulnerable adults are just part of the enthusiasm to combat elder abuse generated by an October conference in Anchorage.

"I think a lot of people came away from (the conference) with a real sense of excitement and awareness that there have been too few services available to a real at-risk population," said Becky Smith, a social worker with DFYS in Ketchikan.

Smith and about 130 other social service providers, seniors, members of the Older Alaskans Commission (OAC) and hospital workers attended the conference, "Elder Abuse: A Front Line Perspective," sponsored by Providence Hospital, DFYS and the OAC.

Keynote speaker Dr. Sue M. Parkins, an emergency room

protective team in Toledo, Ohio, discussed the signs and symptoms of elder abuse.

"The classic victim is a 75-year-old frail woman who has some medical problems," Parkins said. "The profile of the abuser is characterized by stress... substance abuse, financial stress," she said.

Most abuse occurs in families which have always been abusive, Parkins said. The family may have an abusive member or just be dysfunctional.

Parkins gave an example of how an abusive situation may evolve. A young man loses his job and moves in with his mother because he can no longer manage financially. He probably has a substance abuse problem which gets worse the longer he is unemployed.

As long as the mother is healthy the situation is okay, but as she gets older and more frail things deteriorate.

"Mom becomes more and more of a burden and starts being neglected or frankly abused," Parkins said.

"Mom may get dependent to the degree that she can't care for herself and really needs professional care or placement. If mom gets placed then her assets have to be liquidated," Parkins said, referring to Medicaid requirements to spend down assets before a person may receive nursing home coverage.

There is no incentive for the son

Most abuse occurs in families which have always been abusive. The family may have an abusive member or just be dysfunctional.

to place the mother since he then loses his place to live. Instead, he starts collecting his mother's Social Security checks and other entitlements. And the mother steadily declines without the help she needs.

Unreported abuse

In 1983 there were 273 reported cases of elder abuse in Alaska, Parkins said. But she is uncomfortable with these statistics.

"We can see those abused and try to imagine how many others there are," she said.

Typically, one out of every eight victims reports abuse, according to Parkins. Seniors are hesitant to report abuse for a number of reasons. Often it is their own family members abusing them, Parkins said.

Abused seniors also are fearful of what will happen if they report. Will they have to leave their home and enter a nursing home?

Not only are seniors hesitant to report abuse, health care professionals and service providers

may not recognize signs of abuse.

"A lot of elder abuse findings relate to hygiene," Parkins said. Look for bed sores, she suggested.

Dehydration and malnutrition also are indicators. Seniors are more fragile than children when it comes to nutritional needs, Parkins said. If dentures are fitting improperly, it could mean the person has lost a lot of weight.

Look at a person's skin, Parkins said.

Are there bruises? Burn or frostbite injuries?

If there are injuries, ask the person what happened.

"Listen to the story you're being told and if it doesn't make sense... then you have to wonder (if abuse is occurring)," Parkins said.

Documentation is key to getting more resources for combatting elder abuse, Parkins said.

Coordinating services

In a later panel discussion, conference participants discussed ways to improve the current system for dealing with elder abuse in the state.

"One of the keys that people identified at the conference was greater coordination of already existing services for elders and other vulnerable adults," said DFYS director Russ Webb.

Strategies for increasing coordination include community organizing, case assistance, increasing basic services such as foster homes, and developing a

central office responsible for coordinating services at the state level.

Conference participants spent much time in individual groups hashing over the best ways to tackle the elder abuse problem.

"The group I went to was on community organization," said social worker Becky Smith.

"(The group) identified some criteria on how to make that happen. In a sense that's what we're doing," Smith added, referring to the elder abuse task force she later started in Ketchikan.

The Ketchikan task force is one of four elder abuse task forces in the state. Others are located in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau.

"Our goals are to identify what services are being provided and what the criteria for receiving those services are," Smith said.

People may be denied services because they don't fit income or age requirements, Smith said. She and the 11 other members of the Ketchikan task force want "to do some brainstorming" on how to provide services to these people.

"Our goal is to line up all service agencies to do a coordinated public presentation," she said.

For more information on the Ketchikan task force call Becky Smith at 225-6611.

For information on elder abuse in your community or to report elder abuse, call the Division of Family and Youth Services.

Elder abuse law not solving growing problem

It's been five years since the Alaska legislature tackled the problem of elder abuse and passed a reporting law. But just about everyone dealing with the law says it hasn't even come close to solving the problem.

The law encourages people to report abuse. It requires people in a number of professions, such as doctors, police officers, pharmacists, administrators of nursing homes, social workers and employees of projects funded by the Older Alaskans' Commission to report suspected abuse.

But many of these people aren't reporting.

For example, said Anita Stevens, executive supervisor for the Anchorage office of the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS), the office has received no reports from the Anchorage Police Department, even though there has been at least one case involving the department. The case was later reported by another social service agency. (See story, page 11).

There are all kinds of reasons why people aren't report-

ing, said Pat O'Brien, statewide DFYS consultant for adult services in Juneau.

"We don't realize that elders are vulnerable," she said. It's hard to tell whether a caller is being abused or if they are just "crotchety," she added.

Many services are reluctant to "tell on" their abusive clients, O'Brien said. They look at it as confirmation that they are "losing it," she said. And others just don't want to get the alarm in trouble.

"Some of those who should be reporting think DFYS isn't going to do anything," O'Brien said.

Even though elder abuse is not being reported every time it occurs, the tally of abuse reports from July 1987 through June 1989 shows an alarming problem. DFYS received more than 800 reports of abuse of people age 60 and older. That was more than 67 percent of all adult abuse reported.

By most accounts this is only the tip of the iceberg. "In this state we have a long way to go," said O'Brien, who just returned from a national conference on elder abuse.

Stories by Pamela Cravez

"The field is booming." O'Brien said.

The lack of reporting in Alaska is a real stumbling block, according to Lela Millham, head of the Elder Abuse Task Force in Anchorage.

Proper statistics are needed before programs can be developed to deal with elder abuse, Millham said. Even though there seems to be a great need for an elder abuse center and other abuse respite care, you can't get money to deal with the problem without first having statistics that show the extent of the need, she explained.

In Juneau there used to be a fairly active elder abuse task force. But the lack of reporting made it hard to keep working on the problem, according to Norma Nicholas, Nicholas, who is an advocate for older women at the Aiding Women From Abuse and Rape Escapement (AWARF) shelter in Juneau, has no doubt that elder abuse exists in Juneau.

"What I do in public speaking to raise awareness," Nicholas said.

"Caretakers are generally the abusers," she added.

If an elder is being abused, social workers have very few options for taking them out of

the abusive situation. There is only one foster home in Juneau, according to Roseann Green, a social worker with DFYS in Juneau. And that home is licensed to care for only five people.

Green referred one elderly man to the foster home when conditions at his own home became intolerable.

Three generations were living in the same home, Green said. The grandson kept demanding money from the grandfather. He'd take the grandfather's money and spend it through the bars with him, spending his money and security tampering him.

"The grandfather's son was distressed and, as was cooperative," Green said. "We placed the grandfather in an adult foster home and he was delighted."

The Juneau man was lucky. Many seniors being abused or neglected have no options in their communities. In many Alaskan communities there are no adult care foster homes, nursing homes, or even adequate humanitarian services to help relieve the stress and strain that a firm leads to abuse by a caregiver.

In Fairbanks, for instance, where there is an active and effective elder abuse task

force, there are few alternatives for elders who are being abused or neglected.

"Some of the folks just aren't appropriate for foster care," said Flory MacIver, staff manager for the Fairbanks office of DFYS. "And medically they don't qualify for nursing home care," she added. The big need is for an intermediate care facility. Currently, a person has to go to Anchorage to get that sort of care, she said.

The 1983 elder abuse reporting law allows an elder to refuse help, to halt an investigation into reported abuse. Often, a senior does just that, especially when the only alternative is an abusive situation in a foster home or an unfamiliar city far from friends and relatives.

What follows on these two pages are individual stories about Alaskan seniors in abusive situations. These are elders who have been physically abused, financially abused or neglected. As with many elder abuse situations in Alaska, the only "respite" to some of these seniors was a decision to continue to put up with the situation, for lack of better alternatives.

But social workers in elder abuse programs are sometimes as hard to come by in Alaska as the statistics that define the extent of the problem.

Statistics on Abuse

ALASKA'S elder abuse reporting statute requires people in a number of professions to call the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) if they suspect a person 60 or older is suffering harm.

Below are statistics from reports made to DFYS from July 1987 through June 1989. Pat O'Brien with DFYS in Juneau explained that the numbers don't add

up in all categories because of differing reporting practices in DFYS offices around the state. Some reports contain just the name and age of the person abused, O'Brien said.

If a case was not confirmed, that does not mean there was no abuse occurring, O'Brien said. Sometimes it meant a caller would not talk to DFYS, or a DFYS worker could not get in touch with the person.

Number of Reports	
Age 60 and over	278
Age 60 - 64	28
Age 65 - 69	186
Total	492
Sex of Victim	
Male	185
Female	307
Type of Harm	
Abandonment	17
Abuse	171
Economic Harm	127
Neglect	173
Relationships of Perpetrator to Victim	
Wife	7
Husband	40
Son	43
Daughter	19
Other Male Family Member	30
Other Female Family Member	19
Other Male	49
Other Female	68
Did the Victim Consent that the Investigation be Terminated?	
Yes	117
No	180
Type of Reporter	
Anonymous	160
Other	77
Was the Report Confirmed?	
Yes	160
No	184

Source: Division of Family and Youth Services, Department of Health and Social Services Adult Protection Services Annual Report, Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1990.

Neglect: Devastating as physical blows

James James was selling himself regularly. A couple of times he was found in the cold in Bethel without enough clothes on. Though his family was supposed to pay his bills, buy his food and take care of his medical needs, they did not. Old age assistance checks were being cashed on James' behalf but he wasn't getting the money. "Everybody thought it was anonymous," said a Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) social worker in Bethel. "Everything needed to be done."

James (not his real name), in his 70s, was a victim of elder abuse. He wasn't being beaten, he was neglected. For an elderly person who can't take care of himself, neglect can be just as devastating as outright physical blows.

Bethel Community Health Director Dr. Orace Alford remembers another one elder man with a dislocated shoulder. He was brought in five or six days after it happened.

His wife was an alcoholic, and so was his son. The man couldn't take care of himself and had fallen out of bed.

They let him sit for days, Alford said. And that kind of injury hurts his back, she added.

Alford, who had practiced in Chicago where she saw much more elder abuse, credits an Eskimo hunter for saving her with holding down the

Alford has seen people put up with less-than-desirable conditions to stay with their families.

There are many elderly in the Bethel area, said the social worker who related the story of James James, but few victims of elder abuse. If she had to guess, the social worker said she would put the number of elder abuse reports at no more than one or two a month.

But both the social worker and Alford say there are probably more cases than they are aware of. James' family neglected him because they were drinking, the social worker said. They didn't pay attention to James' needs.

He needed help changing himself, he couldn't hear, and he was almost blind, the social worker said.

DFYS handled James' problem by holding family meetings. At the meetings the family admitted that they were unable to care for James.

DFYS tried to get James into the Arapahoe Apartments, another housing in

Bethel, where he could stay with another relative, but there wasn't any space available. So James was sent to a nursing home in Seward, far from friends and relatives.

He died two years later. "I don't think he really wanted to leave," the social worker said. "If he had a choice he would have stayed in the condition he was staying in," she added.

Alford has seen people put up with less-than-desirable conditions to stay with their families.

Alford told the story of an elderly woman who had a stroke and was determined to stay with her daughter, even though the daughter had her own family to care for.

Alford got reports that the daughter was neglecting her mother. But after visiting the home, Alford determined the daughter was doing the best she could.

The mother was admitted to bed and referred to come to the hospital for rehabilitation, Alford said. She needed constant care, she needed to be turned every two hours, to be fed and bathed.

"Mom" was a 10-hour nursing home patient," Alford said. Still, Alford remembered the mother to be allowed to remain in the home and helped the daughter get homecare services.

A home-care nurse came and bathed the daughter with shower her house a day.

It gives the son my nose-give a break, Alford said.

They love their children so they deprive themselves

When money that could pay for warm clothes and food is regularly taken from an elder by younger relatives and used for something else, an alert social worker would likely classify this as elder abuse.

But for too often, the elder person isn't aware of being abused. And even if they don't like the situation, they don't want anyone coming in to try to fix it.

"They don't understand the word 'abuse,'" said Agnes Moore, an elder abuse worker at Fairbanks Women in Crisis-Developing Assistance (WIC-DA).

Moore, 68, has seen many younger relatives manipulating grandmothers or grandfathers to get the elder's money. The elder may not understand there are options, and they may not even think Moore's

agency is trying to help, Moore explained.

"Because they love their children and grandchildren, they deprive themselves of their own needs," Moore said.

"By the end of the month they don't have enough food or clothing."

And in Fairbanks, where winter is severe, lack of adequate clothing can be serious.

"I can't go in there and say 'stop doing that,'" Moore said. "It's their own life."

That is one major difference between elder abuse and child abuse. In cases of suspected child abuse, a social worker can take the child away from the family if he or she is being harmed.

"We can intervene against a child's will," said Play

In a real low voice the Kaltag woman whispered, 'I don't know why she does it.'

MacPhee, staff manager for the Fairbanks office of the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS).

In elder abuse, the elder must be willing to accept services, and often that doesn't happen, MacPhee said.

"It's hard for an elder to admit that maybe it's their child abusing them. It's a shameful thing," MacPhee said.

Remains the law recognizes that older people are capable of making their own decisions, the court can intervene without the elder's consent only after an elder is declared incompetent, according to MacPhee.

Many of the cases Moore sees do not involve incompetent elders, just frail or dependent elderly being taken advantage of by children or younger members of the community.

"I know one case where the mother is crippled and has a drinking problem," Moore said. Her son takes money away from her, telling her she is no good.

He sees her drinking so an attempt to argue with her.

"She gets so drunk she gives money to people of him. . . he beats her up if she doesn't give it to him," Moore said.

Moore spoke with another woman from Kaltag whose daughter was suspected of beating her. The mother denied that her daughter broke her arm and told Moore she fell on the wet pile.

"I speak her language," Moore said. "And I told her her daughter was abusing her," Moore said.

In a real low voice the Kaltag woman whispered, "I don't know why she does it."

That was all the woman would say about the abuse. "She knows it's there," Moore said. But she depends on her daughter for everything.

"She (the daughter) cleans house, gets water and wood for me," the woman told Moore.

Without her daughter, the woman said, she simply couldn't manage.

Physical abuse: He'd rather handle it himself

Jim McKay's stepson tried to make an item about him.

One day when McKay (not his real name) reached down to turn off the TV, his stepson caught him off guard and belted him one.

McKay, in his 70s, is a victim of elder abuse. Like a number of other Alaskan elder abuse victims, he says he'd rather handle it himself, with police help when necessary, than get involved with restraining orders or the state social service bureaucracy.

"It's (the stepson) another

son, who drank, pushed people around," McKay explained of his 26-year-old stepson.

More than once McKay has called the police to kick the stepson out of the house.

McKay, a recovering alcoholic himself, is a small self-published man with a shock of graying hair and an infectious smile.

"I wasn't afraid," McKay said. "I didn't want to hurt him because I know this man about me. . . If I start I'd go a little too far and it don't pay. . . I'm too old to

spend time in that place where these kids are," he said.

Even after his wife's death, McKay has been harassed by her children.

They tormented him the new home he moved into. He and his wife — who was part Native — had qualified for the home before she died. Afterwards, the lender assured McKay he could continue his application for the house, even though one of the qualifications of ownership was Native ancestry. The stepchildren didn't agree.

"They wanted to get the house for themselves," McKay said. He offered to let them live with him and even offered to let his stepson live in the old trailer run-down.

Nothing seemed to satisfy them. The stepchildren would get drunk and become abusive to McKay.

The stepson kicked down the door of McKay's new home. His stepdaughters stole family photos and mementoes while McKay was out. One stepdaughter physically attacked McKay, and another pushed him in the back

and smacking him all over the face.

McKay explained that he tried to hold his own and was able to wiggle free.

The last time the police came to take the stepson, McKay saw their report. It listed every time they had to intervene between McKay and the stepson.

The policeman told McKay he could get a restraining order from the court to stop his stepson from contacting him, but McKay refused.

McKay hasn't seen his stepson since.

Where to report abuse

If you suspect elder abuse contact the nearest Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) office. DFYS staff is required to investigate all reports of elder abuse and to provide protective services where needed. The investigation will be terminated upon the elder's request.

- Anchorage, general reporting number 278-1600; David Tard, 285-6018; Andy Linn, 285-6008.
- Fairbanks, 338-1844.
- Juneau, Kamona Green, 633-1882.
- Kotzebue, Randall Eiken, 236-8811.

WANTED: COMPUTER

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Especially helpful would be an IBM-compatible PC (a computer that will accept DOS and 5 1/4" disks). We are open to loans or donations of equipment for the four-month duration of the class.

These JTPA classes are employment-oriented and have helped many seniors return to work with new skills.

Loans/donations are tax deductible and would greatly benefit both Anchorage and Mat-Su seniors.

Focus call Jane at Older Persons Action Group, Inc. 278-1008.



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Anchorage, Alaska 99509-8928

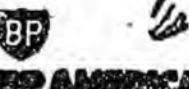
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