

SB

3

SB 3 -

Comte payee 2 zero final note -

3-27 Called 2450 Terri Landerbach for CS in final -
Left ward w/ Phone Answerer -

3-27 - 3672 Called Pegun for final note on
CS - He did not have CS -

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 3

Revision Date March 22, 1991

Dept. Affected Health & Social Services

Title: "An Act relating to protection of elderly person from harm"

BRU: Family Services

Sponsor: Kerttula

Component: Southcentral, Northern, Northwestern, Western & Southeastern

Requestor: Senate HESS

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 0254

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY92	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97
PERSONAL SERVICES	236.7	298.2	298.2	298.2	298.2	298.2
TRAVEL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
CONTRACTUAL	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5
SUPPLIES	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
EQUIPMENT	34.5					
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	296.2	323.2	323.2	323.2	323.2	323.2

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE						
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FUNDING:

(Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	386.9	368.8	368.8	368.8	368.8	368.8
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	386.9	368.8	368.8	368.8	368.8	368.8

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: NONE

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This analysis is based on 5 Social Worker III positions, one at each region listed above. Appropriate pay scales have been used for each position based on region position will be located at.

First years personal services amount is based on 10 months funding, each year following that is based on 12 months funding.

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

Phone: 465-3191

Date: _____

Approved by Commissioner: Theodore A. Malá, MD, MPH
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Date: 3/22/91

Distribution (by preparer):

Legislative Finance OMB
 Legislative Sponsor Impacted Agency(ies)
 Requestor

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

No. 1

Bill Version: SB 3

(S) Publish Date: 2-1-91

Revision Date: January 21, 1991

Department Affected HSS

Title: "An Act relating to protection of elderly person from harm"

BRU: Family Services

Sponsor: Kerttula

Component: Southcentral, Northern, Northwestern, Western & Southeastern

Requestor: Senate HESS

COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

0	2	5	4
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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
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REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0
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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
Division: Family & Youth Services

Phone: 465-3191
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).

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill No. CSSB 3 (Judiciary)

Revision Date: _____ Department Affected: Alaska Court System
 Title: An Act relating to protection of BRU: Trial Courts
eldering persons from harm Components: _____
 Sponsor: Kerttula
 Requestor: _____ 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						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS & CLAIMS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

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

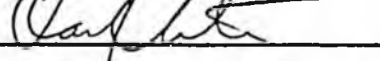
POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: None

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact.

Prepared by: C. S. Christensen III, Staff Counsel  Phone: 264-8228
 Division: Alaska Court System Date: 03/22/91

Approved by: Arthur H. Snowden, II, Administrative Director  by C. S. Christensen III
 Agency: Alaska Court System Date: 03/22/91

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

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1991 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 3(JUD)

Revision Date: _____
Title: An Act relating to protection of elderly persons from harm.
Sponsor: Senator Kerttula
Requestor: Senate Judiciary

Department Affected: Public Safety
BRU: Village Public Safety Officers
Component: Contracts

COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

	5	1	6
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EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (Inflation not Included)

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

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER/PROG RCPT						
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 None

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No fiscal impact is anticipated.

Prepared by: Gayle A. Horetski Phone: 465-4322
 Division: Office of the Commissioner Date: 3/27/91
 Approved by Commissioner: Gayle A. Horetski for Richard L. Burton
 Agency: Department of Public Safety Date: 3/27/91

Distribution (by oreparer): 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 Halford, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Senator Kerttula

SUBJ: Senate Bill 3 --
Elder Abuse

DATE: February 14, 1991

*Get fiscal
note*

*Get the rest of
the pre-requisites
for hearing from
Kerttula.*

Last year, doctors had to surgically remove an elderly Anchorage woman from a chair in which she had been confined for months by her husband. This woman had been forced to sleep, eat, and defecate in that chair. Concerned neighbors and others had made several reports regarding this situation to the Department of Health and Social Services. Social workers "investigated" these reports by telephone and this woman, with her husband standing by her side, was unable to tell them what was being done to her. The Long Term Care Ombudsman has told me that what happened to this woman is not an aberration in the system.

Senate Bill 3 would require social workers to conduct in-person investigations of reports of elder abuse. The bill is needed and I urge you to schedule it soon.



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

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

MEMORANDUM

To HSS First

TO: Senator Rick Halford, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee

FROM: Senator Jay Kerttula

SUBJ: Senate Bill 3 --
Investigation of Elder Abuse

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jay Kerttula".

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

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 several newspaper articles on the topic for your information.

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.

To LAA Legal -

From Doug Bailey - Senate Judiciary 465 3717

Please Prepare a Judiciary Committee Substitute for SB 3 to include the following changes:

Sec 1 line 6 to read

department may not terminate an investigation at any time until after the department or its designee has

Sec 2 lines 12-13-14 are deleted.

New Section 2 to provide

~~AS 47.24.020 is amended to read~~

In second sentence of 47.24.020

The department or its designee shall personally interview

Is this all perfectly clear?

Thanks - DB

March 14 -

Adams asks is there enough money to visit every village in his area particularly when we reduce the age by 10 years and Gov. reduces travel budget by 10% -

Holford - The age change affects ^{an} ~~the~~ entire group of statutes on elderly.

Skertchula staff - Age change not critical to Sen. K.

Mike Price -

Dir - Family & Youth Services - Mike Price -

Can't project how many more cases the change in age will generate.

Perhaps UPSO could conduct the face to face - Not the Dept.

Wm O'Connor - Long Term Care ombudsman.

Wants 5 new positions -

Request Fiscal note from Court - Gov Public Safety -
Law - one is requested from HSS at hearing.

CS Passed w indiv rec subject to member seeing draft and fiscal note.

SENATE BILL NO. 3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS KERTTULA, Rodey

Introduced: 1/21/91

Referred: HESS and Judiciary

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to protection of elderly persons from harm."

2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 * Section 1. AS 47.24.020(c) is amended to read:

4 (c) The department shall immediately terminate an investigation under this section upon
5 the request of an elderly person who is the subject of a report of harm, except that the
6 department may not terminate an investigation at any time until after the department^{or its designee} has
7 conducted a face-to-face interview with the elderly person who is the subject of the report
8 of harm. However, if the department has reasonable cause to believe that the elderly person is
9 incapacitated, the department may petition the superior court under AS 13.26 for appointment of
10 a guardian or temporary guardian for the elderly person for the purpose of obtaining consent to
11 continue the investigation.

12 * ~~Sec. 2. AS 47.24.100(6) is amended to read:~~

Deleted w/o objection -

13 (6) ~~"elderly person" means a resident of Alaska who is 55 [65] years of age or~~
14 ~~older;~~ *Sec 2*

*47.24.020 add "or its designee" in
this statute. also. This amendment of*

adopted.

FAX
258-4968

Count Fiscal
Note
Please

7-LS0001ND ✓
Lauterbach
3/15/91

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 3 (JUDICIARY)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATORS KERTTULA, Rodey, Uehling, Sturgulewski

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to protection of elderly persons from harm."

2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 * Section 1. AS 47.24.020(a) is amended to read:

4 (a) Upon receiving a report of harm, the department shall promptly initiate an
5 investigation to determine the economic or physical condition of the elderly person named in the
6 report and whether action or services are needed for the protection of the elderly person. The
7 department or its designee shall personally interview the elderly person during the investigation
8 unless the elderly person is unconscious or otherwise physically or mentally impaired to such an
9 extent as to be unable to respond to questions.

10 * Sec. 2. AS 47.24.020(c) is amended to read:

11 (c) The department shall immediately terminate an investigation under this section upon
12 the request of an elderly person who is the subject of a report of harm, except that the
13 department may not terminate an investigation at any time until after the department or
14 its designee has conducted a face-to-face interview with the elderly person who is the subject

1 of the report of harm. However, if the department has reasonable cause to believe that the
2 elderly person is incapacitated, the department may petition the superior court under AS 13.26
3 for appointment of a guardian or temporary guardian for the elderly person for the purpose of
4 obtaining consent to continue the investigation.

ANCHORAGE TIMES May 13, 1990



Elderly remain silent to abuse

Kathy

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 1980 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.

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

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.

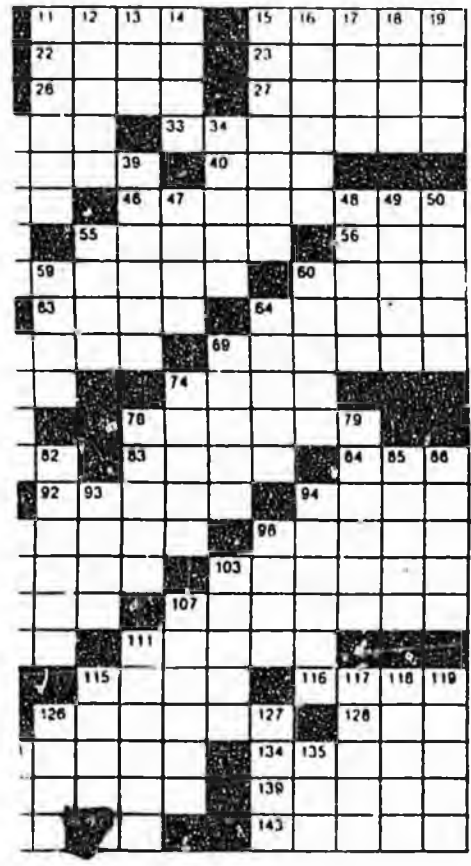
Burke said abuse of the elderly, physical abuse in particular, is not a severe problem in Anchorage. When there is abuse, it often is a result of alcohol or drug abuse and a dysfunctional family setting, the same conditions that give rise to child abuse.

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 housekeeping services and gather at the senior

See Elderly, page C-4

AGE
OLD

97 Seed coat
98 Deprivation
100 Turn aside
101 Cosmetologist
102 Auditor
103 Norman Vincent
105 Russian
107 Library patron
109 Bowling units
110 Actress Dahl
111 Lacking
114 Western movie
115 Join
117 Straight in
118 Mongolian
119 Elevate
120 Turmeric
121 Singer
122 Pell
123 New Haven
125 Li I Abnour
126 English
127 Bare
131 Young insect
133 Robot play
135 Annoy



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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-

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

In April, these Meals On Wheels vans delivered 2,714 warm 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 for 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 \$3,000 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. 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.

Conference renews battle against elder abuse

by Pamela Cravez

A new elder abuse task force in Ketchikan is steaming ahead with plans to coordinate services among agencies to 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 doctor and member of an adult

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.

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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' Organization to report suspected abuse.

But many of these people aren't reporting.

For example, said Anita Stevens, 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 21.)

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 senior is being abused or if they are just "crotchety," she added.

Many seniors are reluctant to "tell on" their abusive children, 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 abuse 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 1988 shows an alarming problem. DFYS received more than 900 reports of abuse of people age 60 and older. That was more than 60 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 Taki Pulliam, head of the Elder Abuse Task Force in Anchorage.

Proper statistics are needed before programs can be developed to deal with elder abuse, Pulliam said. Even though there seems to be ample need for an elder abuse shelter and elder 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 Emergencies (AWARRE) shelter in Juneau, has no doubt that elder abuse exists in Juneau.

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

"Caroleen is generally the abuser," 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 Ramona 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 around town carousing through the bars with him, spending his money and sexually harassing him.

"The grandfather's son was distressed and, so, 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 one in their community. In many Alaskan communities there are no adult care foster homes, nursing homes, or even adequate homemaker services to help relieve the stress and strain that often 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 seniors who are being abused or neglected.

"Some of the folks just aren't appropriate for foster care," said Play MacI'hea, 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 to an abusive situation is miles away in 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 "revolution" to some of these cases was a decision to continue to put up with the situation, for lack of better alternatives.

But actual solutions to elder abuse problems 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 1988. 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 senior would not talk to DFYS, or a DFYS worker could not get in touch with the person.

Number of Reports	
Age 60 and over	275
Age 60 - 64	25
Age 65 - 69	185
Total	480
Sex of Victim	
Male	185
Female	305
Type of Harm	
Abandonment	17
Abuse	171
Economic Harm	127
Neglect	173
Relationship of Perpetrator to Victim	
Wife	7
Husband	40
Son	43
Daughter	19
Other Male Family Member	30
Other Female Family Member	19
Other Male	48
Other Female	52
Did the Victim Request that the Investigation be Terminated?	
Yes	117
No	160
Type of Reporter:	
Mandatory	189
Other	77
Was the Report Confirmed:	
Yes	150
No	184

Source: Division of Family and Youth Services, Department of Health and Social Services Adult Protective Services Annual Report, Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1988.

Neglect: Devastating as physical blows

Rashen James was seeing 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 ambulance checks were being cashed on James' behalf but he wasn't getting the money.

"Everybody thought it was outrageous," said a Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) social worker in Bethel. "Something needed to be done."

James (not his real name), in his 70s, was a victim of elder abuse. He wasn't being housed, 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. Grace Alfonso remembers seeing an older man with a dislocated shoulder. He was brought in five or six days after it happened.

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

They let him sit for days, Alfonso said. And that kind of injury hurts like heck, she added.

Alfonso, who had practiced in Chicago where she saw many cases of elder abuse, made an Eskimo respect for elders with holding down the amount of elder abuse she

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

case in Bethel.

There are many elderly in the Bethel area, said the social worker who related the story of Rashen James, but few reports 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 Alfonso 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 cleaning 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 Arlajak Apartments, senior 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.

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

Alfonso talks about 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.

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

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

"Mom" was a 24-hour nursing home patient," Alfonso said. But, Alfonso recommended the mother be allowed to remain in the home and helped the daughter get homemaker services.

A homemaker now comes and helps the daughter with chores four hours a day.

It gives the primary caregiver a break, Alfonso 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 far too often, the older person isn't aware of being abused. And even if they don't like the situation, they just want anyone coming in to try to fix it.

"They don't understand the word 'abuse,'" said Arnon Moore, an elder abuse worker at Fairbanks Women In Crisis-Counseling Assistance (WIC-CA).

Moore, 48, has seen many younger relatives manipulating grandpas or grandpas to get at the elder's money. The older 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 Floyd

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.

Because 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 uses her drinking as an excuse to argue with her.

"She gets scared and she gives money to get rid of him. . . he beats her up if she don'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 wood 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 liked to take sucker shots at 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 figures he'd rather handle it himself, with police help when necessary, than get involved with restraining orders or the state social service bureaucracy.

"He (the stepson) smokes

pot, gets drunk, pushes people around," McKay explained. "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-possessed 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 much about me . . . if I start it I'd go a little too far and it don't pry . . . I'm too old to

spend time in that place where those bars are," he said.

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

They begrudged 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 home, even though one of the qualifications of ownership was Native ethnicity. 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 rent-free.

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 mementos while McKay was out. One stepdaughter physically attacked McKay, punching him in the nose

and scratching him all over the face.

McKay explained that he tried to hold her arms and stop her but she was able to wriggle free.

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

The policeman told McKay he should 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.

Some DFYS numbers to call are:
 • Anchorage, general reporting number: 276-1450; David Tom, 265-6010; Andy Linn, 265-6008.
 • Fairbanks, 452-1844.
 • Juneau, Ramona Green, 598-1881.
 • Ketchikan, Eleanor Etkes, 225-6611.

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