County of Sonoma  
Agenda Item Summary Report

Agenda Item Number: 66  
(This Section for use by Clerk of the Board Only.)

Clerk of the Board  
575 Administration Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

To: Board of Supervisors

Board Agenda Date: June 14, 2016  
Vote Requirement: Majority

Department or Agency Name(s): Human Services, District Attorney, Health Services, Sheriff

Staff Name and Phone Number: 
Diane Kaljian, (707) 565-5950  
Gary Fontenot, (707) 565-5931

Supervisory District(s): All

Title: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Recommended Actions:  
Adopt a resolution proclaiming June 15, 2016 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County.

Executive Summary:

The Board of Supervisors is requested to recognize June 15, 2016 as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County in alignment with the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA). Since 2006, INPEA has promoted international elder abuse awareness in communities throughout the world. This year, the California Elder Justice Coalition and the California Association for Agencies on Aging (C4A) have joined forces to create a new effort of a statewide awareness campaign for California. The campaign slogan is “Know Abuse, Report Abuse”. Locally, the slogan is being used in print and on-line awareness efforts.

In recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County, there will be a display of over 5,200 lawn flags and a banner across Sonoma County at local senior centers beginning on Monday, June 13, 2016 to symbolize the expanding number of reports of elder abuse and neglect made to Adult Protective Services and the Senior Advocacy Services Ombudsman Program in calendar year 2015. Community volunteers will be making elder abuse prevention presentations at senior centers throughout the county to educate seniors how to not be a victim of abuse. To increase awareness in Sonoma County, purple lapel pins are being distributed to the public. The website (www.socoelderprotect.org) with more information about elder abuse is being publicized throughout the County during the month of June 2016. Ads in the Press Democrat will be published to bring attention to the issue of elder abuse in late May and mid-June.

Elder abuse is a significant problem and one that is expected to grow as many countries experience rapidly aging populations. Research indicates that more than one in ten elders may experience some type of abuse, but only one in five cases or fewer are reported. FINDINGS OF A STUDY BY THE STATE OF NEW
York suggest that only one in 24 cases of elder financial abuse is reported.

**Adult Protective Services**

Elder abuse investigation and prevention are a priority for the Human Services Department, Adult and Aging Division. Through the 24-hour hotline, Adult Protective Services (APS) received more than 4,464 reports of suspected elder and dependent adult abuse in calendar year 2015. The trend for 2016 indicates that the number of reports is continuing to increase. APS is staffed by Human Services Department social workers as well as Department of Health Services staff co-located at Adult and Aging including three public health nurses and two behavioral health clinicians.

**Long Term Care Ombudsman**

Senior Advocacy Services (SAS) Ombudsman Program responded to over 900 reports of elder abuse and neglect in licensed care facilities in Sonoma County in calendar year 2015. The residents were able to obtain resolution for their complaints over 80% of the time by working with the state certified, highly trained Ombudsman staff and over 2000 donated hours from volunteer Ombudsman advocates. Additionally, the staff and volunteer Ombudsman provided over 3000 informational and referral consultations to the residents and community. SAS also conducted significant outreach and education to the community around elder abuse by delivering more than 30 community presentations.

**District Attorney’s Office**

The Sonoma County District Attorney’s Office works closely with Adult Protective Services, law enforcement and other community organizations to ensure that elder abuse investigations and prosecutions are prioritized and that elder crime victims are treated with dignity. The District Attorney’s Office has appointed a chief deputy district attorney, two full-time deputy district attorneys, a district attorney investigator and two elder advocates to the office’s Elder Protection Unit. Recently, the District Attorney completed the successful administration of a $400,000 federal elder abuse grant. The grant was obtained from the United States Department of Justice through the Office on Violence Against Women and Adults in Later Life. The purpose of the grant was to enhance training and resources to fight elder abuse and the abuse of dependent adults. The grant was hugely successful. Through the grant, the District Attorney’s Office and Human Services, along with their community partners, provided direct training to more than 200 front line law enforcement officers, direct service providers, judges, and prosecutors. That training is continuing even without the support of continued grant funding. For example, on May 4, 2016, the District Attorney’s Office provided an eight hour Elder Abuse training seminar to approximately thirty local law enforcement officers. The District Attorney’s Office also continues to speak with elder groups and public service organizations on a regular basis to educate seniors about the risks of fraud, undue influence, physical and social isolation, assault, and neglect. When crimes are committed against an elder, the District Attorney’s Office and law enforcement partners aggressively pursues justice in the courts, including protective orders to help keep elder victims safe, obtain court-ordered restitution, counseling and other services. The District Attorney’s Office has worked closely with Human Services to provide legal services aimed at maintaining elder safety, and hired a Care Coordinator who works out of the Family Justice Center to guide elder victims to critical community resources. As a result of these and other successful collaborative efforts, more elders in Sonoma County are receiving the security, services, and support they need to lead healthy, productive lives.
Sheriff’s Office

The Sheriff’s Office takes elder abuse very seriously and is committed to collaborative efforts to prevent these cases. The Sheriff's Office aggressively investigates any and all allegations of elder abuse and works with the District Attorney's office to bring those guilty of preying on the elderly to justice.

Community volunteers

Elder Protection Workgroup members make community presentations about elder abuse prevention to senior groups and other interested audiences around the County. The workgroup is comprised of AAA Advisory Council members, DA representatives, APS and Ombudsman staff and community volunteers.

1National Center on Elder Abuse, 2010

Prior Board Actions:

Approved annually by the Board of Supervisors
6-9-15 – Board declared June 15, 2015, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County.
6-10-14 – Board declared June 15, 2014, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County.
6-4-13 – Board declared June 15, 2013, as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Sonoma County.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Goal 1: Safe, Healthy, and Caring Community

Creates awareness of elder abuse to increase prevention efforts and abuse reporting resulting in increased health and safety for Sonoma County seniors.

Fiscal Summary - FY 15-16

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Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts (If Required):

There are no fiscal impacts resulting from this administrative action.
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**Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):**

None

**Attachments:**

Resolution

**Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:**

None