

Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response Project

*A Project of the Area Agency on Aging of Dane County
1955 W. Broadway, Suite 105, Madison, Wisconsin 53713
(608) 224-3666*

Since 1999, Dane County has been developing experimental and innovative community response systems for elder abuse and neglect prevention and intervention. Initially, these efforts led to a collaboration or “alliance” between the District Attorney, Sheriff, Domestic Abuse Program Director, Human Services Department Managers, head of the Area Agency on Aging’s Elder Abuse and Neglect Office, and Senior Centers and Coalitions. Now there is an ongoing system of community resources focused upon protecting older adults. The various projects operate under the auspices of a community coordinated response group called the Joint Coordinating Committee on Elder Abuse and Neglect.

The Joint Coordinating Committee on Elder Abuse and Neglect (JCCEAN) is appointed by the Commission on Aging / AAA Board of Directors and the Commission on Sensitive Crimes. They are charged with providing leadership for the county in public education, policy development, system coordination and enhancements. The JCCEAN conducted research in 1999 and reported on the need for system changes for improving community protection and services to older adults. In early 2002 a planning meeting was held and new goals were established. The JCCEAN has remained a vital force in elder abuse prevention and intervention.

The Fiduciary Abuse Specialist Team (F.A.S.T.) includes attorneys from the district attorney’s office, the Department of Justice and private firms, local bank officers, financial counselors, social workers, and law enforcement officers. F.A.S.T. focuses on prevention, public education, system development / coordination, and case consultation. In its first year, the FAST has resulted in a number of successful prosecutions after which restitution was ordered. Modeled after California FAST projects, this important effort in Madison, Wisconsin continues to enjoy enthusiastic support from California FAST coordinators and prosecutors, as well as from elder law attorneys, our district attorney, law enforcement and victim advocates in Wisconsin.

The Multi-Disciplinary Team on Abuse of Elders and Vulnerable Adults provides a monthly forum for all human service, health care and law enforcement agencies to present cases anonymously about abused, neglected, exploited or at-risk adults. The M-Team helps to identify additional intervention options and to discuss the many ethical dilemmas inherent in the situations. The facilitated team is exploring methods of ethical decision-making. Cases include domestic violence, self-neglect (hoarding), medical neglect, and sexual and physical assaults.

Sub-Committee on Public Education and Professional Training currently meets bi-monthly and creates packages for training of various lengths on elder abuse. The Sub-Committee will target certain geographic areas of the county and selected professionals for 2003/4.

The Hoarding Task Force, now completed, included representatives of public health, mental health and human service agencies as well as a local public utilities company, the county board, and building inspection departments. The Task Force was concerned with older people who have severe problems with hoarding materials and/or animals. They worked to improve community response by cross training, coordinating efforts, creating protocols and providing public education. Hoarding cases are now referred to the Multi-Disciplinary Team mentioned above.