

District Attorney's Elder Abuse Unit

Elder abuse is one of the fastest growing crimes in our community. Recognition of this trend is slow and similar to where domestic violence and child abuse were twenty years ago. These crimes are often under-reported and under-investigated. Because of this these crimes are also often difficult to prosecute. The District Attorney's Office is committed to the aggressive prosecution of those who victimize seniors. We intend to send a clear message to offenders that this conduct is serious, illegal and will not be tolerated.

In early 2010 Jefferson County District Attorney Scott Storey announced the launch of the Elder Abuse Prosecution Unit. The creation of this unit was in direct response to the changing demographics of Jefferson County as well as recognition that law enforcement can do a better job in the prosecution of crimes that are perpetrated against the elderly. The Elder Abuse Unit is the only one of its kind in the State of Colorado and is leading the charge in this type of prosecution. The Elder Abuse Unit works closely with local law enforcement agencies, Adult Protective Services, private organizations and professional communities to locate and hold accountable those who commit these crimes.

Features of the District Attorney's Elder Abuse Unit:

- Specialized prosecutors dedicated to prosecuting all types of crimes perpetrated against the elderly.
- Training for law enforcement.
- Resources for the community, victims, and service providers.

What is Elder Abuse?

Elder abuse can be any type of crime perpetrated against older adults, who are considered "at-risk" adults. This can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial exploitation, neglect and sexual abuse. Colorado defines an "at-risk" adult as a person age 60 or older.

Warning signs of elder abuse:

Physical Abuse: bruises, scratches, burns, broken bones or other injuries which are

not explained.

Neglect: changes in personal grooming, weight loss, unkempt appearance, unsanitary living conditions, dirty and un-bathed.

Financial Exploitation: depletion or large withdrawals from bank accounts, changes in designation of beneficiaries to wills or other financial documents, actions exceeding the scope of a power of attorney, new friends or relatives appearing in the elder's life, unnecessary purchases or expenditures.

Sexual Abuse: bruising around genitalia, venereal disease or unexplained infections, torn, stained or bloody clothing.

Emotional Abuse: overbearing or threatening caregiver, changes in mood or behavior.