



The Arc of
Aurora

Call to Action: Resolution Calling for a National Response to Abuse of Adults with Disabilities

Please add your name (and, if possible, your organization's) to this first of its kind resolution calling for national action to address the abuse neglect, and exploitation of adults with disabilities - ALL adults with disabilities where ever their place of residence and regardless of their age.

The resolution does not advocate for any particular piece of legislation. By signing it you are merely affirming that abuse of adults with disabilities is a serious problem which merits serious national attention.

The resolution was created through a joint effort of NAPSA and The Arc of Aurora, CO. In addition to the original resolution being adopted by individuals and allied organizations nationwide, a modified version of the resolution was adopted by The Arc of the United States Congress of Delegates on November 14, 2009. That modified resolution did not impact the intent or goal, and between the modified and original resolution, it has been adopted by over 200 people and organizations to date.

If you have not yet had the opportunity to sign this important resolution and would like to do so, please e-mail Aubrey Grant at aubrey.grant@apsnetwork.org with the subject line "Resolution." If your e-mail address does not include your name (or your organization's), please be sure to include it in the body of the message so it can appear on the signature page. You are also urged to forward the resolution to your colleagues, friends and family members for their endorsement as well.

A RESOLUTION to Promote Collaborative Leadership to Address Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of Vulnerable Populations

Whereas according to the 2007 U.S. Census estimate, approximately 52.4 million Americans are 60-years or older; and

Whereas according to the 2002 U.S. Census, approximately 51.2 million Americans (18.1 percent of the population) live with a wide array of physical, cognitive, and/or emotional disabilities; and

Whereas a disability is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities and can include mental illness or a physical or developmental disability; and

Whereas people aged 60-years or older and/or adults with disabilities must be assured that no policy or law would renounce their rights, including the right to have a voice in decision-making through self determination and self direction in all areas of their daily life and in public policy decisions affecting them; and

Whereas people aged 60-years or older and/or adults with disabilities should not have to pick between being institutionalized or being abused, exploited or neglected; and

Whereas people aged 60-years or older and/or adults with disabilities must be provided equipment, assistance, and support services necessary for full productivity, provided in a way that promotes dignity, equal access and independence; and

Whereas people aged 60-years or older and/or adults with disabilities are vulnerable populations because they have unique lifestyles and needs, and share a combined risk for increased victimization because of their reliance on other people for life supports including but not limited to activities of daily living and money management; and

Whereas people aged 60-years and older:

- experience 90% of abuse and neglect incidents by known perpetrators, usually family members such as adult children or spouses; and
- experience shows that 42% of murder victims over age 60 were killed by their own offspring; and
- spouses were the perpetrators in 24% of family murders; and
- according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the eldest of our seniors -- 80+ years -- are abused and neglected at 2-3 times the rate of all other senior citizens; and

Whereas adults with developmental disabilities:

- are statistically more likely than those without disabilities to be victims of crimes; and
- according to the Crime Control and Prevention Act of 2007, each year an estimated 5 million cases of abuse are committed against persons with developmental disabilities and more than 70 percent of those crimes are not reported; and
- research suggests that 97 to 99 percent of abusers are known and trusted by the victim who has intellectual disabilities; and
- experience a majority of abuse perpetrated by family members and peers with disabilities, and disability professionals; and
- may experience sexual violence at rates as high as 83% (women) and 32% (men).

Whereas 81% of people with mental illness who are patients in a facility:

- have been physically or sexually assaulted, research suggests.

Whereas women with physical disabilities:

- Sixty-two percent (62%) report experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse.

Whereas the failure to coordinate activities relating to, and to comprehensively prevent and treat abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults threatens the futures and well-being of millions in the United States;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the problems of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of vulnerable adults requires a comprehensive, collaborative effort of national organizations and other leaders dedicated to supporting older persons and adults with disabilities that includes Adult Protective Services and health, mental health, criminal justice, legal, advocacy and social service agencies and organizations;

Further, be it resolved that this collaborative effort shall provide leadership and critical assistance for and with vulnerable populations by working together to promote:

- Self determination that advances the role of self advocacy by older persons and adults with disabilities in the decision and policy making that impacts their lives
- Leadership to address the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of the Nation's older persons and adults with disabilities
- Federal legislation that provides resources for prevention, reporting, investigation, assessment, treatment, and prosecution efforts of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older persons and adults with disabilities throughout all levels of government;
- Resources to States and communities to provide for and improve protective services and to promote justice for older persons and adults with disabilities;
- Standardization to increase the professionalization and effectiveness of Adult Protective Services in the United States;
- Coordinated planning and development of standards of care for victims of abuse, neglect and exploitation in all levels of government through partnering with Adult Protective Services, health, mental health, criminal justice, legal, advocacy, and social service agencies and organizations that work to eliminate, mitigate, or respond to situations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of older persons and adults with disabilities; and
- Sharing knowledge relevant to protecting older persons and adults with disabilities through comprehensive improvements to the nation's Adult Protective Service systems.

All organizations concerned with the abuse, neglect and exploitation of adults with disabilities of any age are encouraged to adopt this resolution.

This resolution has been adopted by:

Organizations

- Disability, Abuse & Personal Rights Project of SPECTRUM INSTITUTE (CA)
- The Academy for Professional Excellence, San Diego (CA)
- The Arc of Adams County (CO)
- ARC Thrift Stores (CO)
- Association for Community Living in Boulder (CO)
- Autism Society of Colorado
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Developmental Disabilities Council
- Former CO State Rep. Gwyn Green, Gerontological LCSW
- Mile High Down Syndrome Association (CO)
- Parent to Parent (CO)
- The Arc of Arapahoe & Douglas (CO)
- The Arc of Aurora (CO)
- The Arc of Colorado
- The Arc of Denver (CO)
- The Arc of Jefferson County (CO)
- The Arc of Larimer County (CO)
- The Arc of Mesa County (CO)
- The Arc of Pikes Peak Region (CO)
- The Arc of Pueblo (CO)
- The Arc of Weld County (CO)
- The Legal Center for People with Disabilities & Older People (CO)
- Montgomery County Health Department (IL)
- Massachusetts Disabled Persons Protection Commission
- Olmsted County Adult Protection Team of Rochester MN
- Lifespan of Greater Rochester (NY)
- National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)
- National Council on Crime and Delinquency
- Ohio Coalition for Adult Protective Services
- Hamilton County Job and Family Services (OH)
- Volunteers of America

Individuals

- | | | |
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| Don Reeder (CO) | Vivian Frazier (DC) | Lynn Sellers (IL) |
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