(Draft 9/2022) AGENCY NAME

**Policy Name:** Reporting Elder Abuse/Neglect **Effective Date:**

**Policy No.: Revision Date:**

**PURPOSE**

**In the United States and around the world elder abuse is a silent epidemic. Only 1 in 10 incidents of abuse is reported.** ([NCEA - Research Statistics and Data (acl.gov)](https://ncea.acl.gov/About-Us/What-We-Do/Research/Statistics-and-Data.aspx#prevalence) **Elder Abuse happens in the home where the older adult is isolated. Most often elder abuse is perpetrated by a family member or trusted person. Out of fear, most older adults do not tell anyone about the abuse. Therefore, it is imperative that all Rhode Islanders, including those who work with older adults recognize the signs of abuse and report abuse so that older adults remain safe.**

***Abuse of an older adult or vulnerable person is a crime as stated in RI General Laws 42-66-8, “*Abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect of elderly persons - “Duty to Report” and 40.1-27-2, “Duty to Report Vulnerable Persons.”**

*\*An* ***older adult*** *is a person 60 years or older per Rhode Island General Laws.*

*\*A* ***vulnerable person*** *is 18 years or older, suffers from physical or mental incapacitation that restricts the ability to perform normal daily living activities per Rhode Island General Laws.*

*The law requires all those who suspect a Rhode Island resident is a victim of any form of elder abuse to report to the RI Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) Adult Protective Services (APS) Unit on-line at* [*www.oha.ri.gov*](http://www.oha.ri.gov) *or by calling OHA at 401-462-0555. Reports can be made 24 hours a day, 365 days a year*.

*Abuse of a vulnerable person reports are filed with the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) at 401-462-2629.*

*Abuse of a resident in a nursing home or assisted living facility, and* *any person receiving hospice and/or homecare are filed with the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman at 401-785-3340.*

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for reporting suspected or known abuse of older or dependent adults.

*Agency Name* is committed to protecting the rights, safety and dignity of each of its clients. Any employee, volunteer, or vendor of *Agency Name* who has reasonable cause to suspect or knows that an older adult has been abused, exploited, or neglected as defined in RIGL, 42-66-8 and 40.1-27-2, must report such information immediately to the Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) or the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals (BHDDH) or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman.

Any employee, volunteer or vendor shall report the suspected abuse to their appropriate agency supervisor in accordance with agency policy and per the agency’s incident report protocol.

**POLICY**

Any employee, volunteer, or vendor who is told of, is a witness to, or suspects abuse of an older or dependent adult **must** immediately report the abuse, as required by law, to OHA, BHDDH or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman. Employees and volunteers will report to their agency supervisor in accordance with agency policy.

*Agency Name* will conduct an annual Elder Abuse training for all staff members and volunteers.

**PROCEDURE**

1. Reporting Procedures
   1. When to Report:

Report to OHA, BHDDH or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman and the agency supervisor immediately upon witnessing, suspecting or learning of the abuse.

* 1. What to Report:

An employee, volunteer or vendor must report to OHA, BHDDH or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman any suspicion of or any known abuse including physical abuse, abandonment, isolation, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, financial exploitation or self-neglect. Reports can be made anonymously. Per RIGL § 42-66-11, all reports and reporters of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect are confidential.

\*\*Employees or volunteers must also make a report to the agency supervisor.

* 1. How to Report:

File an on-line report with the Office of Healthy Aging at www.oha.ri.gov or call 401-462 -0555, or the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals at 401-462-2629 or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman at 401-785-3340.

* 1. What to Document:

OHA: (www.oha.ri.gov) Complete the report form by clicking on the “Report Elder Abuse” tab in the upper right-hand corner of the website home page. This tab will take you to the “Secure Web Intake Link” where the “Protective Services Report” is located. All required information must be entered for the report to be received successfully.

BHDDH: Call 401-462-2629 to describe the suspected abuse of the vulnerable person and to describe the suspected abuse. Reports can be made anonymously.

RI Long Term Care Ombudsman: Call 401-785-3340 to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare, and rights of individuals who reside in Long Term Care (LTC) facilitiesor for any person receiving hospice and/or homecare.

\*\*Agency supervisor – report the incident according to agency procedures.

* 1. On an annual basis *all staff* shall be trained in the recognition and reporting of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect.

f. Established procedures for reporting suspected or known abuse of older or dependent adults does not preclude a reporter’s responsibility to report suspected or known abuse to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

1. I have read this policy and understand that under RI General Law I must report all suspected abuse of an older or dependent adult to the Office of Healthy Aging or the Department of Behavioral Health, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals or the RI Long Term Care Ombudsman. This signed statement will be placed in my personnel file.

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Name and Job Title Date

(9/2022)

*While every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy of content, the Rhode Island Coalition for Elder Justice assumes no responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions in the content of this material. The information provided and expressed within this publication is intended as a guide only.*