

National Center on Elder Abuse
NCEA E-NEWS

Highlights:

Actor William Mapother Takes on the Fight Against EA

NCPEA Announces RFP for Elder Justice Community Collaborations

NAPSA Begins Digitization of Training Library

New York to Embark on Statewide EA Study

NAELA Conference Coverage

Contents:

EA National Spokesperson... 1

Elder Justice Community Collaboration RFP Announced...3

Digitization of NCEA Training Library Begins...5

NY Statewide EA Study...6

NAELA Institute Addresses EA...7

State News...8

Federal Legislation...10

Current Research...12

Commentary...13

Calendar of Events...14

William Mapother of TV's "Lost" Enlisted as National Spokesperson

The movement to focus national attention on elder mistreatment now has a national celebrity spokesperson to champion the cause: film and television actor William Mapother. While visiting his native Kentucky for the Thanksgiving holidays, Mr. Mapother volunteered his creativity and time to shoot a series of national and regional public service announcements to highlight the gravity, complexity, and widespread but often invisible nature of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The PSA series was funded by the State of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services in conjunction with the NCEA, and marks the first time that the Center has engaged a national spokesperson beyond the aging, health, and social services arenas. The project is an example of national, state, and local collaboration -- a synergy essential to maximizing limited resources and

cultivating broad scale awareness. The process began when Kimberly Baker, Kentucky Policy Analyst and Elder Abuse Specialist, discussed with the Louisville Metro Local Coordinating Council on Elder Abuse the NCEA mission to launch a national public awareness campaign. (cont. page 2)



Kim Baker (left), along with Jennifer Leibson, presenting William with NCEA plaque of appreciation.

“I think I’ll keep my day job,” joked Kimberly Baker, regarding her experiences as point person on the PSA series production.

CANE-UD Enlists Cab Calloway School of the Arts for NCEA Youth Movement

In November, CANE-UD recruited the Cab Calloway School of the Arts (CCSA) of Wilmington, Delaware, to participate in NCEA youth related activities. High school communications, visual, and performing arts students are invited to participate in the upcoming arts competition. The competition is designed to increase discussion of elder abuse, ageism, and intergenerational issues.

CCSA, named in honor of the legendary Delaware bandleader and singer, was ranked 419th among U.S. schools by Newsweek

National Spokesperson: William Mapother

cont. from front page.)

Council Chair Jennifer Liebson of the county attorney’s office offered to contact her cousin, Mr. Mapother, who plays Ethan Rom on ABC’s hit drama, “Lost.” Within 48 hours, he was fully committed and scheduled to shoot a series of scripts on the only open date in his upcoming schedule – a day less than two weeks away.

Ms. Baker, the series executive producer, immediately obtained a production crew, studio time, and feverishly began developing 10, 15, 20, and 30 second television and radio scripts. Although she had worked on the development of “Unheard Cries: Elder Abuse in Kentucky,” a public awareness DVD produced in 2006, she had never faced such a tight deadline for a communications project. “I think I’ll keep my day job,” she joked as she brain-

stormed, wrote, and rewrote with cabinet colleagues and CANE-UD representatives Sharon Merriman-Nai and Karen Stein, who head up the NCEA national campaign. Mr. Mapother was thoroughly immersed in the project from the first discussion, providing support and feedback at every stage of development. While he had previously been aware of elder mistreatment, he was genuinely shocked at its magnitude and complexity. He stands eager to promote the issue in upcoming initiatives, intends to address the topic publically at every opportunity, and will see that his fan website includes information on elder abuse.

A compassionate and generous individual, Mr. Mapother is also a prolific actor. In addition to his role on “Lost,” he recently starred in the film, “Moola” and has been

featured in “The World Trade Center,” “Swordfish,” “The Zodiac,” “Magnolia,” and “Mission Impossible II,” among others. Many of you will recognize him from his numerous TV credits, including appearances on “CSI,” “CSI: Miami,” “Law and Order: Special Victims Unit,” “Crossing Jordan,” and “NCIS: Naval Criminal Investigative Service.” In March, he is slated to begin filming “The Flicker’s Dance.” Prior to becoming an actor, Mr. Mapother taught in the East Los Angeles school system, and his insights based on those experiences may be a bonus as the NCEA reaches out to students in the “Youth Movement” campaign.

Post-production on the PSA series is scheduled to be completed in early 2008, and CANE-UD will now begin the next phase: targeting media outlets to air the spots.

NCEA Elder Justice Community Collaborations Project: NCPEA Announces Request for Proposals

The National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NCPEA), the NCEA grantee designated to foster multidisciplinary responses to elder abuse, recently announced a request for proposals to fund elder justice community collaborations. (To review the complete RFP and to obtain proposal guidelines, visit the [NCEA web site](#).)

As quoted from the RFP: "Experience has shown that the problem of elder abuse is best addressed as a multi-disciplinary effort, with a strong foundation at the local level, which is key in building an effective elder justice network (Kasunic, M. et al. 2004). Because individual agencies alone cannot fully address the problem, communities nationwide have increasingly focused their efforts on elder abuse detection, intervention, and prevention strategies through formal or informal collaborations or partnerships. Such partnerships have evolved into elder justice community collaborations and elder abuse prevention coalitions, networks, and alliances. These collaborations have heightened public awareness through community outreach and education, and some have been able to affect strident laws for reporting and prosecuting elder abuse. Other benefits of collaborating include improved communication and cooperation among coalition member agencies and increased responsiveness to elder abuse cases, improved access to a wider range of services, and improved quality of care for clients...."

"The NCEA Elder Justice Community Collaborations project has two activities related to developing elder justice coalitions. This RFP supports the development of multi-disciplinary coalitions at the local level by providing on-site training and technical assistance to Area Agencies on Aging, Title VI Grantees, and/or community organizations interested in developing new (not currently existing) elder justice coalitions. If a state unit on aging is a single PSA (does not have designated area agencies on aging), they may be considered for a mini-grant under this RFP.

"In addition to the mini-grants, a second activity will involve working with State agencies and area agencies on aging to assist in the widespread implementation of elder abuse community coalitions, other multi-disciplinary teams, state and local elder rights networks, and activities relating to the special problems of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. The second activity will be *targeted to states in regions having the highest number of mini-grant awardees*, and will provide technical assistance through training sessions, teleconferences, phone calls and webinars to assist them in developing, implementing and sustaining new or existing local and statewide elder abuse networks.... *(continued on page 4)*

RFP for Elder Justice Community Collaborations Announced (cont. from page 3)

“NCPEA, for the NCEA, will award, through a competitive application process, 10 elder justice community collaboration mini-grants in Year 1, each in the amount of \$10,000, dependent on satisfactory completion of project criteria (with additional mini-grants awarded in Years 2 and 3 if the project is refunded). Grants will provide seed money to assist organizations in developing **new, local** multi-disciplinary elder justice networks to develop strategies to address detection, intervention and prevention of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation....”

Any Area Agency on Aging, Title VI Grantee, or community organization that is committed to developing a new elder justice network and receiving training and technical assistance is eligible to apply.

The deadline for submitting applications, by [e-mail](#) or by fax (202-223-2099), is Friday, December 21, 2007, 5:00 p.m. EST.

For further information about this project, contact [Pamela Teaster](#), NCPEA President-Elect (telephone : 859-257-1450 ext. 80196).

Special thanks to Pamela Teaster, NCPEA, President-Elect, for submitting this article.

What Do You Think?

Question of the Month:

Based on your own experiences with multidisciplinary task forces, coalitions, and other collaborations, what has been the most significant outcome?

We welcome readers thoughts on this topic. Email your comments to:

NCEA-info@aoa.hhs.gov

Include “Question of the Month” in the subject line. We will include excerpts in next month’s newsletter, along with a new question to consider.

THANKS!

November’s Question of the Month:

Do you think that an effective public awareness campaign to raise the visibility of elder abuse must also address ageism?

“I answer this with a resounding YES. It doesn't need to be overdone, or take away from the importance of the issue of elder abuse, but it should be there. It is my experience (limited as it is), that ageism leads to many types of elder abuse, and/or leads to an indifference to elder abuse.

If I were devising the ad, I might show vignettes of about 5 elderly people, from active to bed-ridden, and have each of them speak a very powerful line. One of which could be something like ‘I’m old, not ignorant’ or ‘I am not useless’.”

Michele Brinson

NCEA Training Activities Update: Elder Abuse and APS Training Library is Going Digital

A key objective of the current NCEA is to expand and support multidisciplinary training opportunities for professionals working with older individuals vulnerable to mistreatment. NAPSAs is the NCEA grantee designated to evaluate training needs and disseminate training resources.

In an effort to fully exploit technology to enhance elder abuse prevention and intervention, the National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA) has embarked on a major renovation of the NCEA Elder Abuse and APS Training Library. NAPSA will begin the digitization of educational materials created for APS and other professionals addressing the needs of vulnerable individuals. The project will minimize a number of barriers common to training efforts for responders by providing electronic access to a wide variety of resources. The accessibility of these materials will not only reduce the often prohibitive costs of professional training; it will also allow flexibility in terms of time management to those seeking to improve their professional skills. In addition, it will provide a range of affordable training options to responders working in remote settings.

The library was recently transferred from REFT, Inc. to the NAPSA office in Denver, Colorado. Anne Kincaid, newly appointed Library Director, will begin to evaluate existing "paper only" holdings to decide which should be digitized based upon frequency of usage; how "current" the material is; and whether permission to digitize is granted by the author(s). NAPSA anticipates completing the digitization by the end of June 2008. Jeanne Teske of REFT will provide support and consultation during this transitional period. Resources collected during the 2007 NAPSA conference will also be added to the library's inventory.

In December, NAPSA will also begin canvassing key informants by mail for input regarding the NCEA Training Needs Assessment, requesting feedback on the following questions:

- What groups (by region and profession) should be included in the needs assessment survey?
- What elder abuse training needs assessment surveys have key informants participated in (or are aware were conducted) during the past three years?
- What recommendations can they make to engender multicultural perspectives throughout the survey process?
- Do key informants have any other suggestions or recommendations regarding the needs assessment?

In addition to these activities, NAPSA has begun to identify topics for training and informational webcasts to be sponsored by NCEA quarterly.

Special thanks to Kathleen Quinn, NAPSA, Executive Director, for contributing to this article.

New York to Conduct Statewide Study on Rates of Elder Abuse

Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., Cornell University, and The New York City Department for the Aging (DFTA), will collaborate to conduct the nation's first in depth, statewide study on the rate of elder mistreatment. The project is funded, in part, through the New York State Children and Family Trust Fund, a program administered under the NYS Office of Children and Family Services.

"One of the most exciting aspects of this project is that it will provide a model for replication among other states," said Paul Caccamise, Lifespan Vice President for Programming.

Lifespan was recently awarded \$194,000 to conduct the study. Survey protocol development which will begin in early 2008 and research is expected to be completed within two years. Mark Lachs, MD., of Cornell University, and Jackie Berman, PhD., Director of Research, NYC DFTA, are the principal investigators. Denise M. Shukoff, Lifespan Special Projects Coordinator and coordinator of the New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse, will also play a leading role in the execution of the project. Dr. Carl Pillemer will participate on the project's advisory committee. The proposal resulted from a recommendation generated during the first statewide summit on elder abuse, convened in 2004. The research is intended to produce much needed data to inform the development and targeting of future protective and elder service initiatives in New York.

Based upon research conducted by Pillemer and Finkelhor in Boston (1988), and replicated by Podnieks in Canada (1992), the design will incorporate two methods in what Art Mason, Director of the Elder Abuse Prevention Program and NAPSA President-Elect, describes as a "hybrid prevalence-incidence study."

A random sample telephone survey of older residents will be conducted by Cornell researchers, including multilingual interviewers in order to include diverse participants, such Hispanic and Russian elders. Efforts will also be made to include Native American participants. Investigators intend to survey 4,000 participants aged 60 and over.

In the second part of the study, data will be collected from gatekeeping agencies (such as APS and other direct service providers, law enforcement, District Attorney offices, domestic violence providers, etc.) regarding known or reported cases of elder abuse in order to estimate the rate of identified cases. Lifespan will review upstate counties and DFTA will examine downstate counties.

A major goal of the study is to identify the statewide rates of all forms of elder abuse perpetrated by another party. In addition, analysis will attempt to estimate rates of under-reporting by comparing data gathered through both methodologies. Researchers also intend to analyze demographic and other characteristics associated with elder abuse cases, in addition to regional referral patterns, and information on perpetrator characteristics and behaviors. Those involved have not yet determined how to ensure representation of one of the most vulnerable groups of elders, those with dementia, which is a common problem among aging studies in general.

According to Mr. Mason, "The networking from the state coalition will be vital in *(cont. page 7)*

NAELA Displays Heightened Sensitivity To Financial Exploitation Issues

The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) held its annual Advanced Elder Law Institute November 2-4, 2007 in Memphis, Tennessee. The theme of this year's Institute was "*Elder Law and Advocacy: It's Now or Never,*" and, across all of the various areas of advocacy that elder law encompasses, four of the twenty-two general and breakout sessions dealt with (or touched on) advocacy for elderly and vulnerable adult victims of financial exploitation.

In a general session entitled "*Advocating for the Most Vulnerable: Financial Exploitation Lawsuits to Discover and Recover Assets Stolen from Persons with Disabilities,*" Charles P. Golbert, Esq., of the Cook County Illinois Public Guardian's Office, described the legal theories and methods by which his office has pursued and recovered assets illegally taken from hundreds of victims.

Approximately one-third of all new cases taken on by the Cook County Public Guardian have a financial exploitation component, and that office employs three full-time attorneys to handle financial exploitation recovery matters. Mr. Golbert also described a "hot growth" area of financial exploitation coming into his office: mortgage fraud and "bailout" schemes, under which the exploiter either forges a deed to the victim's home, or pretends to bail out the victim who has fallen behind on mortgage and tax payments, in exchange for the deed to the house.

Another general session, entitled "*From Where I Sit: The Judicial Perspective on Elder Abuse and Exploitation Litigation,*" was jointly presented by the Honorable David A. Hardy, Judge of the Second Judicial Circuit, Reno, Nevada, and by the Honorable Patrick T. Murphy, Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois. Judge Hardy is also a Certified Elder Law Attorney and member of NAELA. His presentation focused on a number of reforms that could be implemented to better serve the elderly in guardianship proceedings. Judge Murphy in his presentation called upon the judiciary to take the lead in combating elder abuse and exploitation, by establishing special divisions within the court system that could focus on the needs of the vulnerable elderly, much like the judicial systems in many locations that are organized to respond to the needs of juveniles. *(cont. on page 9)*

(cont. from page 6) gaining the cooperation necessary to gather the most comprehensive data possible."

Lifespan of Greater Rochester, Inc., of Monroe County, New York is a nonprofit organization that has provided information, guidance, and direct services to older adults for nearly four decades. In 2006, Lifespan served over 20,000 clients throughout ten counties. The Elder Abuse Prevention Program (EAPP), one of a handful of nongovernmental elder abuse programs in the state, was launched in 1987. In 2004, Lifespan convened and co-sponsored the first ever New York State Summit on Elder Abuse. The organization facilitates the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse, a statewide alliance of over 900 professionals and interested citizens.

State News: Initiatives, Programs, and Legislation

Delaware Holds Summit on Elder Abuse

On November 13, 2007, the State of Delaware Department of Justice held a senior summit entitled, "Giving Thanks to a Generation."

The summit coordinated with the Department's recent and pending efforts to enhance prevention and intervention services for seniors who are abused, neglected, and exploited. Attorney General Joseph R. "Beau" Biden, III, who recently created a Family Protection Unit within the state DOJ,

spoke to the conference attendees who included law enforcement, prosecutors, APS, aging services and other professionals, and members of the public.

Paul Greenwood, Deputy District Attorney of San Diego County, California, and renowned elder abuse expert, was keynote speaker. Lester Johnson, Special Investigator, hopes to engage Mr. Greenwood in future statewide training events.

Breakout sessions addressed consumer protection, victims' advocacy, and nursing home abuse, among other topics.

Mississippi Enacts Enhanced Legislation

Mississippi state legislature recently acted to enhance civil penalties to perpetrators who defraud vulnerable adults. According

to George Whitten, legal services developer, "Section 11-7-165 of the Mississippi Code allows recovery of treble damages in a civil suit against a thief who defrauds a vulnerable adult of his property. The civil remedy is additional and supplemental to any criminal penalty imposed for financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult.... The bill proposal went through numerous drafting efforts in the Division of Aging & Adult Services before it was enacted...." The statute also defines the term "position of trust."

Pennsylvania Lawmaker Proposes Tougher Sentences to Address Neglect

Lackawanna County Representative Jim Wansacz, (D-Old Forge) is sponsoring legislation to strengthen sentences for those convicted of "causing death to a care dependent individual through sheer neglect."

The bill was sparked by the highly publicized case of a 69-year-old Alzheimer's patient who died of undiagnosed breast cancer. The patient was under the care of Dr. Gregory Salko, and resided in a personal care home in which the physician was part owner. Dr. Salko has been charged with two counts of neglect in the case.

NIA Grants Awarded to Brown, NYU

The Center for Gerontology and Health Care of Brown University (Rhode Island) was awarded a five-year, \$10 million grant from the National Institute on Aging to analyze factors that affect quality of long-term care. The grant will result in the development of the first national database that will enable researchers to study (cont. on page 9)

Do you want to share news about your state's activities?

Contact the [NCEA](http://www.ncea.gov) at: NCEA-info@aoa.hhs.gov

NAELA Institute Addresses Elder Abuse *(cont. from page 7)*

Consumer fraud against the elderly differs somewhat from financial exploitation as a form of elder abuse (e.g., consumer fraud is perpetrated as part of a trade or business, whereas financial exploitation is usually accomplished surreptitiously by a family member or other abuser of a fiduciary relationship). However, the victims are the same: vulnerable adults. One of the breakout sessions at the NAELA Institute dealt with a growing form of consumer fraud against the elderly: deceptive sales of variable annuities that are financially unsuitable for the elderly purchaser. The presenter was Andrew S. Friedman, Esq., of Phoenix, Arizona, a plaintiff's attorney in suits against the sellers of such annuities. He described the background and progress of ongoing class action litigation in this area.

Finally, at a breakout session on *"Family Feuds: Planning to Avoid Estate Litigation,"* Bette B. Epstein, Esq., of Oakland, California presented materials that discuss some of the reasons for such family feuds (including undue influence of a vulnerable elder) and some of the means to, perhaps, effectively deal with them before litigation becomes necessary.

In 2008 NAELA will be celebrating its 20th anniversary. Each year it holds two conferences, a spring symposium and a fall institute, to offer educational and networking opportunities to Academy members, most of whom are attorneys in private practice. In NAELA's early years, the subject of elder abuse, whether in the form of financial exploitation or in any other form, rarely appeared on a conference agenda. In more recent years, the subject has gotten some symposium or institute attention. Now it is receiving significant attention at NAELA gatherings, a strong indication that the members—particularly those who litigate—are seeking ways to combat elder abuse, and obtain redress for its victims, especially for the victims of financial exploitation.

Special thanks to Jerry A. Hyman, Esq., of Delaware, who contributed this article. Mr. Hyman has been a NAELA member since 1992 and attended the recent NAELA Institute.

(cont. from page 8)
 the impact of state policies and market forces on quality of care in facilities such as nursing homes. The data will assist policymakers to develop guidelines "that promote high-quality, cost-

effective, equitable care for older Americans...."
 NIA also awarded \$396,000 to fund a two-year project on elder mistreatment to researchers at the NYU College of Nursing and College of

Dentistry. College of Nursing Dean Terry Fulmer and colleagues Sheryl Strasser and Stefanie Russell will conduct screenings for elder mistreatment at five primary care clinics. The goal of the study is to "establish the feasibility of EM

screening in primary care settings administered during patient visits, administered by trained clinician screeners at baseline and six-month follow-up using multiple instruments," the press release indicated.

Federal Legislation Update

A Monthly Look at Legislative Activity that May Impact Older

Individuals

The **Elder Justice Act (S. 1070/H.R. 1783)** continues to gain support in the House. The following representatives have recently endorsed the legislation for a total of 86 co-sponsors: Linda T. Sanchez (D, CA-39) and Hilda L. Solis (D, CA-32).

S. 1070 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)
H.R. 1783>> [Click here to read the House bill](#)

The **Stop Senior Suicide Act (S. 1854)**, legislation intended to improve prevention of elder suicide, was recently endorsed by Senator Bernard Sanders (I-VT) for a total of three co-sponsors. Among other provisions, the bill calls for the “establishment of a federal interagency geriatric mental health planning council...”

S. 1854 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)

The **Community Choice Act (S. 799/ H.R. 1621)**, introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) in March, would amend Title XIX of the Social Security Act “...to provide services in the most integrated setting appropriate to the individual's needs, and to provide equal access to community-based attendant services and supports in order to assist individuals in achieving equal opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency....” To date, there are 19 co-sponsors from the Senate and 14 from the House, bringing the total to 40. The following Representatives recently co-sponsored the bill: David Loesback (D, IA-2); Nita Lowey (D, NY-18); and Eddie Bernice Johnson (D, TX-30).

S. 799 >> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)
H.R. 1621 >> [Click here to read the House bill](#)

The **Caregiver Assistance and Relief Effort Act of 2007 (CARE, S. 2121)** was introduced on October 1, 2007 by Senator Robert Menendez (D-NJ) as an Amendment to the Older Americans Act. The bill seeks to “(1) allow caregivers a tax credit for family members with long-term care needs; (2) allow a tax deduction for long-term care insurance premiums; and (3) apply certain consumer protection provisions to long-term care insurance contracts.” The bill, which is co-sponsored by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Frank R. Lautenberg (D-NJ), has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

S. 2121>> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)

H.Res. 791, “expressing the sense of the House of Representatives in support of Federal and State funded home and community-based services for individuals with disabilities of any age, especially the elderly,” was introduced by Representative Alcee L. Hastings (D, FL-23) on November 1, 2007. The bill has the support of three co-sponsors: Representatives Kathy Castor (D, FL-11), James P. McGovern (D, MA-3) and Robert Wexler (D, FL-19) and has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. *(cont. on next page)*

Federal Legislation Update (continued)

H.Res. 791>> [Click here to read the House bill](#)

The **Americans Giving Care to Elders (AGE) Act of 2007**, [S. 2267](#), is “a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an income tax credit for eldercare expenses.” The bill was introduced on October 31, 2007 by Senator Amy Klobucher (D-MN) and is co-sponsored by Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Barbara A. Mikulski (D-MD). It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Finance.

[S. 2267](#)>> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)

Preparing America's Seniors for the Digital Television Transition of Act of 2007, **S. 2125 / H.R. 3862**, is intended “to improve public awareness in the United States among older individuals and their families and caregivers about the impending Digital Television Transition,” recognizing the implications, including isolation, this transition may have on senior citizens. The bill was introduced in the Senate on October 2, 2007, by Herb Kohl (D-WI) and is co-sponsored by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA). It was introduced in the House on October 16, 2007, by Albert Russell Wynn (D, MD-4) and is co-sponsored by Representative G.K. Butterfield (D, NC-1). The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet.

S. 2125>> [Click here to read the Senate bill](#)

H.R. 3862>> [Click here to read the House bill](#)

On November 15, 2007, the Senate Special Committee on Aging held a hearing to describe legislation pending introduction crafted by Senators Kohl and Grassley intended “to improve nursing home quality by increasing transparency and strengthening enforcement.”

[Click here to access the hearing: Nursing Home Transparency and Improvement.](#)

Special thanks to Elizabeth Kowalczyk of the Center for Community Research and Services for contributing this update.

The ElderAbuse Listserve

provides a free, 24-hour, 7-day-a-week online link to others who are working on elder abuse issues. The goal is to provide a forum for professionals working in the area of elder mistreatment to share and solicit information to improve prevention and response efforts for elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and self-neglect. Subscription to the listserve is restricted to professionals in order to facilitate a secure environment for free and open discourse.

To request a subscription to the NCEA ElderAbuse Listserve, complete the form on the [NCEA website](#) or email the list manager, Sharon Merriman-Nai, at NCEA-info@aoa.hhs.gov. Please provide your name, profession, organization/business address, telephone number, and a brief statement of your experience or interest in the field.

Elder Abuse Research

The Clearinghouse on Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly (CANE) at the University of Delaware maintains an annotated catalog of peer-reviewed literature on elder mistreatment and related issues. The following are highlights of recently identified articles. To search for additional references, visit the [CANE website](#).

Implicit Theories of Elder Abuse in a Sample of European-American Descent; Rapoza, K.

Journal of Elder Abuse and Neglect; Vol. 18 (2/3), 17-32; 2006.

Prior studies have indicated that public perceptions concerning elder abuse may influence the detection and reporting of abuse. This study explores public perceptions of what constitutes elder abuse and neglect, using a convenience sample of 76 Americans of European descent, between the ages of 17 to 79, recruited from a larger study on international perspectives on family violence and abuse. Participants completed the Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Family Violence and Abuse survey, which asks respondents to provide examples of elder abuse. Physical abuse and neglect were the most common forms of mistreatment identified at the extreme level, psychological abuse was the most common form identified at the moderate level, and neglect, psychological and verbal abuse were the most common forms identified at the mildly abusive level.

The Making of a Self-Neglect Severity Scale; Dyer, C., Kelly, P., Pavlik, V., Lee, J., Doody, R. Regev, T., Pickens, S., Burnett, J. & Smith, S.; Journal of Elder Abuse & Neglect; Vol. 18 (4), 13-23; 2006.

Although self-neglect is the most commonly reported form of abuse reported to adult protective services in the U.S., relatively little research has been conducted on the issue. There remains a need for a universally accepted definition of self-neglect as well as an accurate method to detect the presence and severity of self-neglect cases. This paper discusses the development, pilot testing and refinement of the Self-Neglect Severity Scale (SSS), an assessment tool designed to identify at-risk individuals so they can be referred for further assessment and possibly treatment. The instrument allows practitioners to collect observations on personal hygiene, functional status and environment.

The Influence of Staffing Characteristics on Quality of Care in Nursing Homes; Castle, N. & Engberg, J.; Health Services Research; Vol. 42 (5), 1822-1847; October 2007.

This study examined the influence multiple staffing characteristics, as well as the interaction between these characteristics, have on quality of care in nursing homes. A survey of 1,071 nursing homes in 2003, yielded data on several staffing characteristics, including staffing levels, turnover rates, worker stability and agency staff. Results showed that each of these characteristics had an influence on quality of care, but that improving quality of care required the improvement of more than individual characteristics. These findings suggest that staffing characteristics need to be addressed simultaneously to improve quality of care in nursing homes.

Special thanks to Liz Kowalczyk of the Center for Community Research and Services at the University of Delaware for compiling this update.

Commentary

Raising Public Awareness: Are We Prepared for Success?

The articles on the preceding pages suggest that elder abuse is becoming a more visible social problem: a national celebrity spokesperson; funding to seed multidisciplinary projects throughout the country; technological initiatives to increase access to training; the first statewide study of rates of elder abuse; an increased sensitivity to elder abuse among legal experts; and a handful of federal proposals accruing congressional support. Are the stars and planets finally aligning to allow elder mistreatment a place on the national stage?

The Baby Boomers, known for social activism, are aging. Elder rights advocates hope that their demographic impact coupled with a need for security and a desire for social justice will provide the catalyst to ignite widespread recognition of elder mistreatment. This begs the question: will the aging and social services arena, the legal system, the health care system, and other entities be able to absorb the accompanying surge of elders and families who will need help?

Every month, the NCEA receives numerous requests from individuals and families who either do not know where to turn for local assistance, or who are frustrated by the limitations of existing resources. The growth of our aging population alone will undoubtedly strain an already stressed network of systems. If we are effective in elevating the profile of elder abuse, the increase in the numbers of those seeking help on state, local, and regional levels may become overwhelming.

Programs designed with outcomes based measures, training informed by research, evidence-based practices, community initiatives shaped by accurate data collection, and an even greater reliance on collaborative efforts will be essential to keeping pace.

While these exciting indicators signify progress, they also signify the challenges to come.

Sharon Merriman-Nai, editor

Calendar of Events

December 9 - 14, 2007

National Victim Assistance Academy

Conference Center at the Maritime Institute
Baltimore, MD

Website: [Click Here](#)

Email: 2007nvaa@ovcttac.org

February 28-29, 2008

*American Psychological Association
(APA) Summit on Violence and Abuse in
Relationships: Connecting Agendas and
Forging New Directions*

Hyatt Regency — Bethesda, Maryland

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: (512) 845-9059

February 11 - 12, 2008

*2nd Annual International Conference on
Elder Abuse*

The Marriott Newport Beach Hotel & Spa -
Newport Beach, CA

This course is designed for physicians, health-care professionals, and others who work with older adults.

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 310-437-0555. ext. 125

April 22 - 24, 2008

International Family Justice Center Conference

Westin Horton Plaza – San Diego, CA

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 888-511-FJCA

May 5 – 6, 2008

*Legal Assistance for Seniors' 4th Annual
Elder Abuse Conference*

Hilton Oakland Airport Hotel – Oakland, CA

LAS is actively seeking proposals for conference workshops. Topics may include: Elder abuse litigation skills; Living trusts, durable powers of attorney, gift deeds; Predatory lending, reverse mortgages, foreclosure, credit counseling; Multidisciplinary team interventions; Forensics of elder abuse.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: Friday, December 21, 2007

Website: [Click Here](#)

March 26-30, 2008

*The National Council on Aging
(NCOA) and the American Society on
Aging (ASA) Annual Joint Conference:
Aging in America*

Marriot Wardman Park Hotel and the
Omni Shoreham Hotel — Washington,
D.C.

Website: [Click Here](#)

Telephone: 415-974-9675

National Center on Elder Abuse

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