**About Financial Elder Abuse **

Senior adults are a prime target for financial exploitation. This exploitation can be perpetrated by caregivers and family members as well as other outside parties. While not all seniors are victims of financial abuse, it is important to be aware of the signs of financial elder abuse in order to prevent it from happening to you or a loved one.

What is Financial Elder Abuse?

It is when an elderly person’s money or property is being used in an unauthorized way. Often they are frail physically and their mental state is not what it once was, so they may not know that they are being abused or they may be too scared to manage the situation.

Elder financial abuse spans a broad spectrum of conduct, including:

* Taking money or property.
* Forging a signature.
* Getting an elderly individual to sign a deed, will, or power of attorney through deception, coercion, or undue influence.
* Using the elderly individual’s property or possessions without permission.
* Promising lifelong care in exchange for money or property and not following through on the promise.
* Confidence crimes ("cons") are the use of deception to gain victims' confidence.
* Scams are fraudulent or deceptive acts.
* Fraud is the use of deception, trickery, false pretense, or dishonest acts or statements for financial gain.
* Telemarketing scams. Perpetrators call victims and use deception, scare tactics, or exaggerated claims to get them to send money. They may also make charges against victims' credit cards without authorization.

Caregiver Exploitation

Exploitation by caregivers is the most common type of elder financial abuse. This is due to the unlimited access caregivers often have to an elderly adults' funds and property as they care for them. Caregiver exploitation is recognized when a caregiver wrongly uses an elderly adult's cash, bank accounts, checks, income or personal items. For example; you notice that the caregiver is using funds for their personal benefit instead of for the elderly adult.

Other ways that caregivers might financially exploit elderly adults is via identity theft or forged signatures. If you notice that a caregiver is not providing for the personal needs of an elder, financial abuse may be occurring.

Outside Party Exploitation

Elderly adults are a leading target for exploitation by outside parties. Many con-artists target the frailty of elderly adults through various methods. The following list is a few of the ways they attempt to con the elderly.

* Taking donations for fake charities.
* Investment fraud.
* Jackpot prize winnings (elderly have to pay money in order to claim prize.)
* Emergency Scams (my child is in the hospital and I don’t have money for gas, etc.)
* Work Scams (is there some work I can do for you, and then charging an excessive amount for the work.)

**How do I report elder abuse?**

**The exploitation of the elderly happens daily. If you suspect elder abuse, you are legally required to report it. Florida and Georgia are mandatory reporting states. You can report abuse at the State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs 24 hour toll free hotline 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) or the State of Georgia Department of Human Services Division of Aging Services at 1-866-55AGING (1-800-552-4464) – Press 3, between the hours of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Calls can be made anonymously**