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- Gail Nardi speaks on how community can help

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Community can help vulnerable adults

May is Adult Abuse Prevention Month

Richmond, Va. – Governor Timothy Kaine has proclaimed May as Adult Abuse Prevention Month in the Commonwealth.

“I encourage all Virginians to make themselves aware of the signs of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation and to get involved. Don’t be afraid to make a report, which can be done anonymously to a toll-free hotline. And for those vulnerable adults who may need a little extra help – particularly the elderly and persons with disabilities – don’t be afraid to accept services or assistance,” said Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Commissioner Anthony Conyers Jr.


10 low or no-cost ways anyone can assist a vulnerable adult

- Say, “Hi,” to an elderly neighbor
- If a neighbor’s mail piles up, knock on the door or call to see if the person is OK. If there is no response, call police and ask them to do a “welfare check”
- Invite a vulnerable adult to dinner or drop off a hot meal
- Make sure a senior citizen’s cooling and heating systems are working properly
- Take an adult with a disability to his or her favorite store, house of worship or hairdresser
- Play a game with an elderly relative
- Invite someone to your Memorial Day picnic
- Help someone with Spring cleaning
- Drive an older person to visit a friend or relative
- Offer to take a vulnerable adult grocery shopping when you go

Adult abuse is on the rise in Virginia and nationwide. Approximately 14,000 incidents of suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of the elderly and adults with disabilities were reported last year to VDSS’ Adult Protective Services (APS) office and local APS units. APS units investigate allegations and provide services to stop or alleviate the mistreatment.

In Virginia, mandated reporters of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation play a critical role in ensuring that suspected abuse is reported to APS. A new online training course is now available – *ADS5055: Mandated Reporters: Recognizing and Reporting Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation*

of Adults. This free training is open to mandated reporters, as well as anyone who would like to learn more about recognizing the signs of adult abuse, neglect and exploitation, and can be accessed at http://www.vcu.edu/vissta/non_vdss_employees/mandated_reporter_courses.htm.

Officials stress that mandated reporters are not the only people who can help reduce and prevent adult abuse. “Everyone can do simple things to help a vulnerable adult,” said Gail Nardi, VDSS APS director. “You can make an anonymous report, and APS information is always confidential.”  - *More from Gail Nardi*

APS has a 24-hour toll-free hotline: 1-888-83-ADULT (1-888-832-3858). Reports can also be made through your local department of social services.

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Interviews are available upon request. For additional story ideas and for information on how your media outlet can help raise awareness of adult abuse, contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov.