**AN INFORMATIONAL PAMPHLET ON REPORTING PROCEDURES AND METHODS OF REPORTING NURSING HOME ABUSE FOR THE PATIENT AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[TABLE OF CONTENTS 2](#_Toc138318528)

[1.0 WHAT IS NURSING HOME ABUSE? 3](#_Toc138318529)

[2.0 TYPES OF ABUSE IN NURSING HOMES 3](#_Toc138318530)

[2.1 Physical Abuse 3](#_Toc138318531)

[2.2 Nursing Home Neglect 3](#_Toc138318532)

[2.3 Sexual Abuse 3](#_Toc138318533)

[2.4 Other Types of Abuse 3](#_Toc138318534)

[3.0 NURSING HOME ABUSE WARNING SIGNS 3](#_Toc138318535)

[4.0 OPTIONS TO REPORT NURSING HOME ABUSE 4](#_Toc138318536)

[4.1 Nursing Home Abuse Hotlines 4](#_Toc138318537)

[4.2 Ombudsman 4](#_Toc138318538)

[4.3 National Adult Protective Services Association 4](#_Toc138318539)

[4.4 Local Law Enforcement 5](#_Toc138318540)

[4.5 Work with Medical Experts 5](#_Toc138318541)

[5.0 STEPS TO REPORTING NURSING HOME ABUSE 6](#_Toc138318542)

[5.1 Step 1 – Understand the Signs of Nursing Home Abuse 6](#_Toc138318543)

[5.2 Step 2 – Document the Abuse 6](#_Toc138318544)

[5.3 Step 3 – Report Nursing Home Abuse to the Proper Authorities 7](#_Toc138318545)

[5.4 Step 4 – Consider Contacting an Attorney 7](#_Toc138318546)

**1.0 WHAT IS NURSING HOME ABUSE?**

Nursing home abuse occurs when caretakers harm residents of long-term care facilities. This abuse can result in trauma, medical emergencies, and even death.

[Nursing home abuse](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/nursing-home-abuse/) is a serious crime that can quickly worsen and even turn deadly if not stopped.

**2.0 TYPES OF ABUSE IN NURSING HOMES**

**2.1 Physical Abuse**

If nursing home staff members intentionally cause physical harm to a resident, they are committing [physical nursing home abuse](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/elder-abuse/types/physical-abuse/). Common examples of physical abuse include pushing, kicking, and hitting.

**2.2 Nursing Home Neglect**

Some nursing home residents may be left unattended for extended periods, putting them in danger. [Nursing home neglect](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/nursing-home-neglect/) can lead to dehydration, sepsis, and pressure ulcers, among other deadly situations.

**2.3 Sexual Abuse**

[Sexual nursing home abuse](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/elder-abuse/types/sexual-abuse/) includes any form of unwanted sexual activity. For example; A 2017 CNN report explored cases where nursing home residents had been sexually abused by staff members. The report found that over 1,000 nursing home facilities had received citations for mismanaging sexual abuse cases.

**2.4 Other Types of Abuse**

Nursing home residents are also at risk of elder financial abuse and emotional abuse. While these types of nursing home abuse may not leave physical marks, they can be just as harmful, severely affecting your loved one’s quality of life.

**3.0 NURSING HOME ABUSE WARNING SIGNS**

[Signs of nursing home abuse](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/nursing-home-abuse/signs/) can range from subtle neglect to blatant physical abuse. Nursing home abuse and neglect warning signs include;

1. Bedsores, especially [stage 4 bedsores](https://www.nursinghomeabuse.org/nursing-home-abuse-injuries/bedsores/stage-4/)
2. Broken bones and fractures
3. Bruises, burns, and welts on the skin
4. Cuts, lacerations, and skin tears
5. Dehydration and malnutrition
6. Facial and dental injuries
7. Falls that cause fractures or head injury
8. Infections that turn into sepsis
9. Unexplainable sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
10. Unexplained weight loss

**4.0 OPTIONS TO REPORT NURSING HOME ABUSE**

(https://nursinghomesabuse.org/faqs/how-to-report-nursing-home-abuse/)

**4.1 Nursing Home Abuse Hotlines**

Two main sources exist to report abuse in nursing homes. These include the National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) and the Eldercare Locator. Both the NCEA and the Eldercare Locator are programs run by the U.S. Administration on Aging, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The NCEA is a national resource Center dedicated to preventing elder mistreatment. The website of the NCEA gives contact information for reporting nursing home abuse in each state. It also provides information on state agencies devoted to the elderly as well as laws and regulations. The Eldercare Locator provides similar resources, including details of local support groups for protecting the elderly. Either of these websites can contribute a wealth of information for family members or friends seeking to ensure that their loved one gets the appropriate care that they need in a safe environment.

**4.2 Ombudsman**

A [long-term care ombudsman](https://nursinghomesabuse.org/faqs/what-is-an-ombudsman/) works as an advocate for residents in nursing homes and other licensed residential settings. Their services are authorized by the Federal Older Americans Act, and there is one designated for every state. The ombudsman provides information on how to find an appropriate long-term care facility and how to get quality care. They are trained to resolve problems in the long-term care industry and to protect the rights of the elderly. An ombudsman can assist you with filing complaints, but they will keep matters confidential unless you give them express permission to share them. This program is run by the Administration of Aging (AoA) and the Administration for Community Living (ACL). In addition to the state ombudsman, local ombudsmen are also appointed.

Long-term care ombudsmen are responsible for the below functions;

1. Addressing residents’ complaints of abuse or neglect
2. Addressing violations of rights or dignity
3. Acknowledging any residents’ concerns about quality of care or quality of life
4. Reconciling issues related to poor quality of care
5. Educating older people about their rights
6. Offering information on making changes to find high-quality care

If you need to speak with your local long-term care ombudsman, you can find their contact information through the [National Consumer Voice website](https://theconsumervoice.org/get_help).

**4.3 National Adult Protective Services Association**

The National Adult Protective Services Association ([NAPSA](https://www.napsa-now.org/aps-program-list/)) works to help older adults and adults with disabilities who need assistance. They investigate cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation alongside physicians, nurses, and law enforcement officers. Every state has an Adult Protective Services (APS) agency, and their services vary across jurisdictions. While their primary focus is on ensuring that the people under their care are not exposed to abuse, they can also assist with developing a health care plan that serves individual needs.

If a report alleging abuse is made to the state or local Adult Protective Services agency, a few steps will occur. The APS screener will review the report to determine whether the actions meet the definition of abuse, neglect, or exploitation as defined by statutory requirements.

If the report meets the criteria, a representative from the Adult Protective Services agency will initiate face-to-face contact with the adult needing assistance. During the face-to-face meeting, the worker will determine what services are required to ensure that the individual’s needs are met to maintain their well-being and independence.

State’s local APS agency may be reached by finding their contact information through the NAPSA database. Most states have a 24-hour hotline available to take confidential reports. If you don’t need assistance immediately, other non-urgent phone numbers are provided.

**4.4 Local Law Enforcement**

If an elderly person in a nursing home or long-term care facility has been seriously hurt or died as a result of any [type of abuse in a nursing home](https://nursinghomesabuse.org/faqs/what-are-the-types-of-nursing-home-abuse/), local law enforcement should be contacted immediately.

Officers can come to the incident site and perform an investigation to determine whether a crime has been committed. If they believe a crime has occurred, the officer may file charges against the perpetrators for one or more crimes, such as assault, homicide, manslaughter, abuse, or sexual or financial coercion.

**4.5 Work with Medical Experts**

If you aren’t sure if an elderly person is being abused, but you suspect that that may be the case, you can ask for help from a trusted doctor or nurse. Medical professionals are trained to identify the differences between the normal side effects of aging and elderly abuse.

Common side effects or signs of abuse can include any of the following; Documented but untreated injuries, Undocumented injuries or fractures, [Pressure sores](https://nursinghomesabuse.org/bedsores/), Poor oral care or lack of cleanliness, Malnourished residents with no previous record of low weight, Bruising in abnormal locations, Unchanged linens, Strong odors or urine or faeces, Trash cans that haven’t been emptied, and A history of reports of abuse in the facility

If you do want to work with a medical expert, it is best to choose someone who is not part of the nursing home or assisted living facility itself, unless they are known to be trustworthy.

You may choose a family doctor or general practitioner experienced in elderly care. They may ask to review the medical records of the elderly person and interview family, close friends, doctors, and nurses at the facility. This is done to determine whether the potential victim is acting outside the normal range of their behaviour.

In many states, medical professionals are [mandated by law to report suspected cases of elder abuse](https://nursinghomesabuse.org/faqs/what-are-examples-of-elder-abuse/). This includes doctors, nurses, home health aides, and nursing home staff. The specifics depend on the state, but the report is usually made to Adult Protective Services.

**5.0 STEPS TO REPORTING NURSING HOME ABUSE**

**(https://www.duffyduffylaw.com)**

It’s something that no one wants to discover that the person they love is being abused in a nursing home. The reality of nursing home abuse causes a rush of feelings not just in the victim, but also in the victim’s family. If they discovered that their loved one is being abused in a nursing home, the following steps can be taken to report the case.

**5.1 Step 1 – Understand the Signs of Nursing Home Abuse**

Nursing home abuse can be clearly evident or it can be subtle. Your loved one may not be willing to admit what is going on and they may begin to withdraw. They may refuse to participate in conversations regarding potential abuse. This is why it is so crucial that you’re able to spot and understand the following signs of nursing home abuse;

1. Bedsores are preventable - If you notice bedsores on your loved one, they are not being turned or moved during the day. Bedsores can be extremely painful and in elderly patients or in patients with certain metabolic diseases such as diabetes, bedsores can quickly become infected and be slow to heal.
2. Unexplained infections or diseases **-** With communal living of any sort there is a risk of an infection spreading. Yet, if your previously healthy loved one begins catching serious infections or develops a preventable disease, this could be a sign of nursing home abuse.
3. Bruises or wounds that bleed- Although it is true that sometimes bruises or cuts are accidents, they can also be a sign of nursing home abuse. It could be physical abuse. It could be negligence on the part of the staff. Regardless, it is a sign that something may not be quite right.
4. Changes in behaviour **-** If your loved one becomes overly aggressive, withdraws around certain people (staff or other resident), cries more, seems depressed, or you notice other changes in behaviour, this may be a sign of nursing home abuse. They could be physically, verbally, or sexually abused by a staff member or even another resident. Your loved one may not be comfortable opening up to you about what may be happening to them.
5. Poor hygiene **-** Nursing homes are meant to help our loved ones continue to live as best they can. This includes helping them with hygiene. If you’ve noticed poor hygiene, it could be a sign of nursing home abuse.
6. Financial problems or a change to their will **-** If your loved one is missing money or has updated their will to leave all of their belongings, money, or estate to someone not in the family, they could be a victim of nursing home abuse. Financial abuse and theft are very real problems in nursing homes.
7. Dehydration or unexplained weight loss **-** Dehydration can kill. If you notice that your loved one is dehydrated or has unexplained weight loss, this may be a sign of nursing home abuse.

**5.2 Step 2 – Document the Abuse**

It’s important that you document the signs of abuse. You may need to take photos. You can use a traditional camera or your cell phone. You may have to document it in writing. Make sure that you keep a log so that you can refer to it when the abuse is reported and so that you have something to rely on if you choose to address the alleged nursing home abuse with a lawyer.

**5.3 Step 3 – Report Nursing Home Abuse to the Proper Authorities**

Although medical professionals and social workers are required to report suspected nursing home abuse, you should not wait to see if someone else reports it. You should report it to the proper authorities to help protect your loved one. If you believe that your loved one has sustained life threatening abuse, call 911.

You should also call the state authorities for elder abuse. Additionally, you should report the abuse to the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. The representatives can help you locate state specific agencies that should be informed about the abuse.

Contact your loved one’s primary care physician about the suspected abuse. You should also reach out to a patient advocate at the nursing home as well as the administrator of the facility (provided that they are not the alleged abuser).

If your loved one has Medicaid or Medicare that helps pay for the nursing home, you may also contact Medicaid or Medicare to report the abuse. Both have a Long-Term Care representative who may be able to help you and your loved one through this tumultuous time.

**5.4 Step 4 – Consider Contacting an Attorney**

Your loved one has the right to a safe, secure living environment. If you believe that your loved one has suffered from nursing home abuse, you may consider calling a civil law attorney who specializes in nursing home abuse cases. This type of attorney can evaluate the case and possibly even help your loved one be compensated because of the abuse that they’ve suffered.