

Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

Board of Directors

Carole Kretschman, Chair

Fran Barman-Paulson
Ted Bunc
Pam Flad
Nikole Jones
Richard Kilmer

Dianne Leigh
Sridevi Mohan
Melissa Ratcliff
Matt Veldran
OPEN

5 March 2019

Josh Kaul, Attorney General
Wisconsin Department of Justice
PO Box 7857
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Dear Attorney General Kaul,

On behalf of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) of Dane County's Board of Directors, we urge you to continue the Wisconsin Elder Abuse Task Force's efforts in combating elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

In April 2017, former Attorney General Brad Schimel gathered over 60 stakeholders across Wisconsin to discuss growing concerns related to elder abuse of Wisconsin residents. In August 2017, the Elder Abuse Task Force convened. Task Force membership includes representatives from DOJ, DHS, DFI, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, Wisconsin State Legislature, law enforcement, Wisconsin Court System, Board on Aging and Long Term Care, Wisconsin Bankers Association, crime victim services, adult protective services, senior living facilities, and senior adult advocacy organizations. Task Force objectives included compiling experience, expertise, and resources from all members to better understand the impact of Elder Abuse in Wisconsin and how to improve outcomes for this growing population while strengthening consumer protections.

In October 2018, former Attorney General Brad Schimel, along with Elder Abuse Task Force members, presented five proposals to former Governor Scott Walker and other policy makers. These proposals included:

1. Blocking suspicious financial transactions to stop elder exploitation
2. Use of Elder Abuse Supplemental Incident Reports for Law Enforcement
3. Enhanced protections for the elders through criminal law reforms
4. Expedited hearings and testimony preservation
5. Specialized Elder Abuse Response Team at DOJ

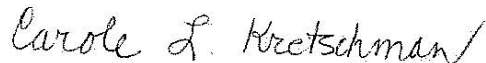
The Elder Abuse Task force also assisted DOJ to develop a public awareness campaign which included radio advertisements, website information, a training video for bank tellers, and the Safe Seniors camera program.

All these efforts come at a critical time as the Wisconsin's elder population is exploding with 10,000 people turning 65 every day; Wisconsin's senior population will increase by 72% by the year 2030. Additionally, elder abuse reports are on the rise--there has been a 160% increase since 2001. Unfortunately this growth only captures a portion of elder abuse as research shows that for every one reported case of elder abuse, 24 cases go unreported.

Elders who experience any form of abuse lose not only possessions and quality of life, but also trust, safety, independence, health, and dignity. Elders also lose relationships with more than half of all reported abusers related to the victim in some way. Lastly, elders and their communities lose \$3 billion dollars per year in financial resources.

Dane County Department of Human Services staff and Elder Abuse Coordinated Community Response Team members provide compassionate and competent response to all reports of elder abuse and exploitation. We urge you to continue the work of the Elder Abuse Task Force in combating elder abuse within our state and local communities. We believe the Elder Abuse Task Force honors senior adults and respects abuse victims.

Sincerely,



Carole Kretschman, Chair

cc: The Honorable Tony Evers, Governor, State of Wisconsin
State Elected Officials
Members, Dane County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive
Ms. Lynn Green, Director, Dane County Department of Human Services