

**HARDIN COUNTY GENERAL HOSPITAL
HOSPITAL-WIDE POLICY**

**Title: RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ELDER
ABUSE/NEGLECT**

Effective Date: 2/1/1999

Policy Number: 141

Med Staff:

Regulation:

Admin:

I. POLICY

Recognizing and Reporting Elder Abuse/Neglect

To provide hospital staff with criteria for recognition of suspected elder abuse and/or neglect, delineate responsibility for reporting and provide the reporting methods and forms.

All licensed hospital personnel may be responsible for recognition and reporting.

Effective January 1, 1999 health care professionals at Hardin County General Hospital who suspect that an eligible adult has been the victim of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation must report this suspicion to an agency designated by the Department on Aging.

II. DEFINITIONS

DOA- Department on Aging

III. RESPONSIBILITY

IV. EQUIPMENT

V. PROCEDURES

INFECTION CONTROL: N/A

RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING ELDER ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

The law specifies that all licensed nurses, physicians, non-medical practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, residents, interns and any other person currently licensed under the Business and Professions Code must report suspected elder abuse or neglect when acting in his/her professional capacity or within the scope of his/her employment.

If a mandated reporter has reason to believe that an eligible adult, who because of dysfunction is unable to seek assistance for himself, has within the previous 12 months been subject to abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, the mandated reporter must report the suspicion. The report must be made to an agency designated by DOA to receive such reports within 24 hours after the mandated reporter develops such a belief.

None of the above-mentioned licensed personnel will incur any civil or criminal liability as a result of making this report.

“Dependent Adult” is defined as any person residing in this state, over the age of 18, who has physical or mental limitations which restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his/her rights, including, but not limited to, persons who have physical or developmental disabilities or who physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age.

Elder abuse should be reported if an observation is made that an elder or dependent adult has had a physical injury or injuries which appear to have been inflicted upon him/her by other than accidental means by any person.

Signs/Symptoms of Physical Abuse:

Physical indications of abuse occur more commonly in clusters of symptoms than as a single symptom. Assess for the presence of two or more of the following:

- Bruises
- Welts
- Lacerations
- Puncture wounds
- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Fractures
- Signs of over-medication
- Burns
- Poor hygiene
- Lack of needed medical attention
- Multiple injuries in various stages of healing
- Injuries inconsistent with explanation
- Injuries during pregnancy

Fiduciary Abuse:

A situation in which a person who stands in a position of trust with the elder willfully steals the money or property of that elder or appropriates the elder’s money or property to any use of purpose not in the due and lawful execution of his/her trust.

Elder and dependent adult financial abuse includes lack of money to buy food or medication, someone consistently visiting around the first of the month when Social Security checks are received and/or checks written to strangers.

Neglect Includes:

Failure to assist in personal hygiene or in providing food and clothing for an elder:

Failure to provide medical care for an elder’s physical and mental health needs, although a person’s voluntarily relying upon treatment by spiritual needs through prayer in lieu of medical treatment does not constitute neglect.

Failure to protect an elder from health and safety hazards.

Failure to prevent and elder from suffering malnutrition.

Abandonment:

Abandonment is defined as a situation in which a person who has the care of or custody of an elder deserts or willfully forsakes the elder under circumstances in which a reasonable person would continue to provide care or custody.

It is the responsibility of the licensed employee who observes the suspected abuse to initiate the reporting process by contacting Illinois Department on aging **(1-800-642-7773)** by telephone. A written referral will also be given to the Social Worker who will insure that sufficient follow up has taken place and the written report completed.

Any licensed employee suspecting elder abuse or neglect of any patient coming into the Emergency Department or being admitted to the hospital is required to call Illinois Department on Aging prior to the patient's discharge. Ideally, the call should be placed as soon as the suspected abuse/neglect has been identified.

VI. DOCUMENTATION