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State awards more than \$800,000 in grants to combat elder abuse

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) announced today that it has awarded more than \$800,000 to three organizations in an effort to combat one of the fastest growing crimes in Michigan, elder abuse.

Funding was available to applicants under OSA's Prevent Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse, Exploitation, Neglect Today (PREVNT) initiative. The organizations that received funding include:

- Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute (PHI Midwest): Awarded \$234,000 to expand Michigan's Adult Abuse and Neglect Prevention (AANP) training and awareness program.
- Prosecuting Attorneys Association of Michigan (PAAM): Awarded \$133,000 to support detection and reporting of financial abuse of Michigan's most vulnerable residents, and to support interdisciplinary investigative teams at the local level. PAAM will develop local programs in Eaton, Ingham, Clinton and Barry Counties.
- Elder Law of Michigan (ELM): Awarded \$449,784 to determine the cost and feasibility of developing an integrated elder abuse reporting system and to develop and implement an ongoing state-level oversight stakeholder body for elder abuse prevention efforts following a proven format. ELM will also increase elder abuse identification and reporting by medical professionals through training and the deployment of interactive web-based screening tools or applications for tablets and smartphones.

"Elder abuse is a growing problem that impacts tens of thousands of older adults in our state each year," said OSA Director Kari Sederburg. "This critical investment will help strengthen and expand current elder abuse prevention efforts, and help Michigan plan and develop a system to address this problem, both now and in the future."

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The PREVNT initiative was made possible through state funding. The state budget, signed into law in late June, included a \$1 million investment for elder abuse prevention efforts. Gov. Snyder included this funding request in his executive budget recommendation and again called for its support when he delivered his Special Message on Aging on June 2.

The remaining state funding will be available in early 2015 in the form of elder abuse prevention mini grants through OSA.

The state estimates that as many as 90,000 older adults in Michigan are victims of elder abuse every year, with many of these crimes going unreported. Nationally, up to 5 million older Americans are abused every year, according to the National Council on Aging.

If someone suspects elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation, call Adult Protective Services at 855-444-3911. If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police.

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