

INITIATIVES

With the expertise, hard work, and perspective of a diverse range of stakeholders, the Elder Abuse Task Force has updated its first set of initiatives. The critical initial goals of the Task Force have been fine-tuned in proposed legislation that will protect the lives and promote the well-being of Michiganders vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Some of the initial goals, including limiting the number of wards per guardian and helping to develop local level multi-disciplinary teams are not included below because our membership is still hard at work. They will be part of the Task Force's future Initiatives and remain high priorities for our team.

- 1. Adopt a [standard Vulnerable Adult Incident Report form](#) for investigation and develop training for law enforcement, prosecutors, Adult Protective Service workers, and the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards academy.
- 2. Mandate reporting for banks and credit unions on suspected fraud or exploitation. [See the Financial Exploitation Prevention Act.](#)
- 3. Require the court to make findings of fact if a person with priority for appointment, such as a family member, is passed over in favor of a party with lower priority.
- 4. Require certification of guardians and conservators (including requirements for minimum training and professional standards) and increase guardians' visitation requirement from once every three months to monthly.
- 5. Refine the process for emergency petitions for guardianship/ conservatorship to promote individuals' due process rights and ensure that guardians are only appointed when no less restrictive alternative exists.
- 6. Clarify and expand the guardian ad litem's responsibilities to ensure the individual appointed by the court to provide information – both to the alleged incapacitated person about the legal proceedings and to the court about the individual's circumstances and wishes – spends adequate time meeting privately with the vulnerable adult, and provides the court with a standardized, thorough, and objective report.

- 7. Improve protections for wards when professional guardians seek to remove them from their homes, including requiring prior consultation with the wards when possible, and consideration of supports and services that would allow the wards to remain in their current residences. Require professional guardians in most circumstances to file petitions seeking court authority to move wards. Require courts to appoint guardians ad litem or, where appropriate, counsel for wards and to schedule hearings before authorizing moves to new residences.

- 8. Establish a clear asset and income threshold above which the appointment of a conservator is required. Require expiration dates for guardian and conservator letters of authority and only renew letters of authority if required yearly reports are filed, thus ensuring ongoing transparency and accountability.

- 9. Improve basic standards for medical reports that are used in guardianship and conservatorship hearings to ensure that these reports are providing the Court with relevant, accurate and complete information related to the individual who is the subject of the hearing as well as the medical or mental health professional who is submitting the report.

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