



## ELDER ABUSE FORENSIC CENTER OVERVIEW

### Purpose

- ✪ Prevent and combat the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of at-risk older and disabled adults in our local community through the collaboration of professionals in law, medicine, and social services.
- ✪ Educate professionals who deal with the crime of elder abuse including law enforcement, the medical community, social services, the legal community, government officials and investigative agencies, academic institutions, as well as older adults and their families regarding effective prevention and prosecution.
- ✪ Advance the awareness of elder abuse through research on abuse and neglect of at-risk older and disabled adults.
- ✪ Create a new standard for interventions that are effective in combating and preventing mistreatment of older adults.

### Overview

Approximately **2 million** American seniors are abused, neglected, or exploited each year. In Orange County, Adult Protective Services receives **500** reports of abuse each month. For every report of abuse, five go unreported, indicating that more than **30,000** of our County's most vulnerable adults endure elder abuse each year.

Launched in May 2003, the Elder Abuse Forensic Center changes the way elder abuse cases are prosecuted through an unprecedented collaborative process. The Center is staffed by professionals from legal, medical, social services, and law enforcement agencies who conduct case reviews; in-home medical and mental status, and evidentiary investigation; taped victim interviews; education; consultation; and research. The collaboration brings these experts together to better understand, identify and treat elder abuse, determine more efficient ways to successfully prosecute elder abuse cases and support the prevention of elder abuse through greater awareness and education among those professionals who work with older and disabled adults.

The Center represents an important step forward in our nation's ability to combat and prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation through its ground breaking collaboration in service, education, and research. Currently, the Elder Abuse Forensic Center is one of the direct service components of the Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse and Neglect [www.centeronelderabuse.org](http://www.centeronelderabuse.org).

## **Program Support**

The Elder Abuse Forensic Center is made possible through a grant from the **Archstone Foundation** and the in-kind contribution of the 9 agencies it houses:

- UCI College of Medicine, Geriatrics
- Adult Protective Services
- Office of the District Attorney
- Sheriff's Department
- Public Administrator/Public Guardian
- Community Service Programs
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Older Adult Services
- Human Options

The Archstone Foundation is a private grantmaking organization, with a mission to contribute toward the preparation of society in meeting the needs of an aging population. Its resources are used to help all generations plan for the aging process and support programs addressing the needs of the elderly in three areas: healthy aging and independence; quality of life within institutions and; end of life issues.

## **Services**

The Elder Abuse Forensic Center offers a number of services including:

- Multi-agency team case review and action plans
- In-home medical and mental status evaluations
- In-home evidentiary investigation
- Taped victim interviews
- Education and training
- Consultation

All coordinated services ultimately provide assistance to seniors and adults with disabilities who have been allegedly abused or neglected.

### **Team Case Review:**

To provide the most comprehensive service, the multi-agency team reviews cases assigned to the Center. The core team consists of Adult Protective Services, the Vulnerable Adults Specialist Team, the Sheriff's Department and the police officers from the case's jurisdiction, the Office of the District Attorney, Victim's Services, and the Ombudsman are available to offer advice when appropriate. The team assists the referring agency to ensure the safety of the older or dependent adult. The goal of each plan is to keep the client safely at home or in the least restrictive care setting. While formal case reviews occur weekly, informal meetings occur daily between the agencies.

### **Home Medical Assessment/Investigation:**

When necessary, the Center's physicians, psychologists, law enforcement officers, deputy district attorneys and social service providers evaluate and assist the at-risk adult at home. The home setting is the best setting because:

- This is where the vulnerable adult is most comfortable.
- Health, safety, and care-giving information can be obtained by evaluating the client's living environment.

### **Education and Training:**

Education and training are key components to the Center. Medical students, residents, and fellows at the University of California, Irvine College of Medicine receive training in elder abuse at the Center. Law students from Chapman University also gain hands-on experience at the Center under the mentorship of their director of clinical evidence.

In addition to educating students, the Elder Abuse Forensic Center will eventually serve as a national training center, where professionals from across the country can gain useful training on the medical and forensic aspects of abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, financial) and neglect, in-home medical and mental status assessment strategies, law enforcement requirements, civil remedies, and steps in initiating interagency collaboration.

### **Consultation:**

In addition to serving seniors in Orange County, the Elder Abuse Forensic Center is accessible to medical and forensic professionals in other areas of the country via phone consultation, tele-consultation, record/photo/video review, and email. This feature provides accessibility to much needed expertise without duplicating infrastructure costs.

#### **Address**

Elder Abuse Forensic Center  
P.O. Box 22006  
Santa Ana, CA 92702-2006  
[www.elderabuseforensiccenter.com](http://www.elderabuseforensiccenter.com)  
(714) 825-3087

#### **Coordinator**

Tom O'Hanlon  
Elder Abuse Forensic Center  
P.O. Box 22006  
Santa Ana, CA 92702-2006  
(714) 825-3087

#### **Contact**

Director

#### **Laura Mosqueda, MD**

Director of Geriatrics and Associate Professor of Clinical Family Medicine  
College of Medicine  
University of California, Irvine  
Phone (714) 456-5530

Co-Director

#### **Mary Twomey, MSW**

Center of Excellence in Elder Abuse & Neglect  
Program in Geriatrics  
University of California, Irvine  
Phone (714) 456-7807