

Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment (TEAM) Institute

Issue Area: Public Safety Services

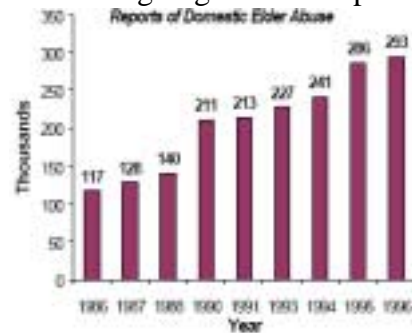
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Elder abuse is a form of domestic violence that has been on the rise since the late 1980's. It has increased by more than 100% from 1988 – 1996 and recent data demonstrates that elder abuse is still on the rise. Texas has the highest rate of elder abuse in the nation. In the fiscal year 2003, Adult Protective services confirmed over forty-five thousand cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation in Texas. There are three main types of elder abuse:

- Abuse is the negligent or willful infliction of injury, unreasonable confinement, intimidation, or cruel punishment of an elderly or disabled person with resulting physical or emotional harm or pain, or sexual abuse committed by the person's caretaker, family member, or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with the person.
- Exploitation is the illegal or improper act or process of a caretaker, family member, or other individual who has an ongoing relationship with the elderly or disabled person using the resources of an elderly or disabled person for monetary or personal benefit, profit, or gain without the informed consent of the elderly or disabled person.
- Neglect is the failure to provide for one's self the goods or services, including medical services, which are necessary to avoid physical or emotional harm or pain or the failure of a caretaker to provide such goods or services.



The Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment Institute was formally established in 1998 to alleviate elder domestic abuse problems. Their mission is to improve the lives of abused or neglected elders through interdisciplinary clinical care, education, and research. From 1994 to 1997, before the formal founding of the institute, the program was a collaboration between the Baylor College of Medicine Geriatrics Program at the Harris County Hospital District and the Adult Protective Services of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Initially begun as a collaboration between social workers and doctors, the formal institute as established in 1997, now includes members varying from

geriatric physicians to court attorneys. Their patients are mainly referred from Adult Protective Service clients.

The institute consists of three main branches: clinical care, education, and research. Under their clinical care branch the team sees clients at acute care settings, outpatient clinics, nursing units, or house calls. The educational mission is fulfilled as third year Baylor medical students accompany specialists to in-home investigations. In addition to doing research and seeking new methods to improve the lives of elders and decrease elder abuse the TEAM institute has made over seventy national and local presentations since 1997.

The organization focuses on two goals in its attempt to end elder abuse; (1) To provide a comprehensive and systematic approach to identification, intervention, and risk reduction to the abused or neglected elderly of Texas. (2) Enable an interdisciplinary effort to meet the many needs of the abused/neglected elderly through geriatric medical treatment, referrals, training, data collection, and research. Elder abuse is a major crime that needs to be curtailed to ensure that older adults can not only age in place, but also age in place peacefully and securely. The TEAM institute is a unique collaboration of a public-private partnership that seeks to end a statewide crisis in Texas and provide a strong example of how to combat this issue.

Related Resources:

Texas Elder Abuse and Mistreatment Institute. <<http://www.teaminstitute.org/>>.

National Center on Elder Abuse. <<http://www.elderabusecenter.org/default.cfm>>.

Elder Abuse Law. <<http://www.elderabuselaw.com/>>.

Widmeyer, Roger. "TEAM Institute: A Collaboration to Deal with Elder Neglect, Abuse." Texas Medical Center News. June 15, 2000.
<http://www.tmc.edu/tmcnews/06_15_00/page_02.html>.