



**For Immediate Release**

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Press Contact

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(Photos Included)

**The USVI Department of Human Services Shows Support for World Elder Abuse Awareness Month**

U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS — The Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Senior Citizen Affairs today joins hundreds of organizations, both public and private, around the world to bring awareness to Elder Abuse and the prevention of it.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15 annually) and World Elder Abuse Awareness Month aim to educate and empower people around the world to be a part of the critical network of safeguarding seniors in our homes and communities. Elder abuse can happen to anyone, but it is increasingly prevalent when seniors are isolated and alone with their abusers; for instance, during the present COVID-19 Pandemic. Many elders are unable to stand up or speak up for themselves either because of their ailments or because they are afraid of the repercussions. These are the reason why Elder Abuse Awareness Month is so very important.

No elder deserves to be abused, but unfortunately, it does occur. Elder abuse can be physical, verbal, emotional, sexual or financial. Elder abuse occurs when an older person is mistreated or harmed by a person or people they trust. Elders are often victimized by other family members, caregivers, friends or neighbors.

**The Department of Human Services abhors Elder Abuse in ALL its forms and places the highest value on securing the safety of every vulnerable senior in the US Virgin Islands territory.** The Office of Adult Protective Services (APS) is the arm within the Department that is legally mandated to investigate in a timely manner, all referrals of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation. APS is also responsible for arranging protective services that ensure safe living conditions for seniors.

We want every senior to know that no one has the right to hit them, to humiliate them, to threaten them, to isolate them, to deprive them of daily care or to take their money or property.



**As we join in this worldwide observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, we implore you to say something if you see something.** In order to do so, you must be aware of the warning signs.

If you suspect that you or someone you know is a victim of abuse, neglect or financial exploitation, call Adult Protective Services (APS) at the Department of Human Services. All calls and referrals are CONFIDENTIAL.

Contact our St. Thomas APS office at: 340-774-0930 ext. 4239  
Contact our St. Croix APS office at: 340- 642-8820



For more information, please visit the Department of Human Services website, [www.dhs.gov.vi](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) or on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/usvidhs>) at US Virgin Islands Department of Human Services.

For more information on Covid19, the new strain of coronavirus, please visit the USVI Department of Health's website, [www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus](http://www.doh.vi.gov/coronavirus) or text COVID19USVI to 888777.  
#COVID19USVI

*The Department of Human Services (VIDHS) exists to provide social services to members in our community with diverse needs. In times of national uncertainty and hardship we act as a safety-net and exist to inspire hope and empower change through non-judgmental, quality delivery of needed services and resources. Please visit the Department of Human Services website, [www.dhs.gov.vi](http://www.dhs.gov.vi) for more information.*

### Photos from DHS Elder Awareness Day on June 15

*“The Department of Human Services was honored by the opportunity to join our voices with fellow advocates in the territory and around the world in full support of Elder Abuse Awareness Day by wearing purple and disseminating information about elder abuse purple on Monday June 15, 2020.”*

(See below)



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