



SHERIFF-CORONER DEPARTMENT
COUNTY OF ORANGE
CALIFORNIA

SANDRA HUTCHENS
SHERIFF-CORONER

September 14, 2012

Honorable Thomas J. Borris
Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

Subject: Reponse to Orange County Grand Jury 2011-2012 Report, "Elder Abuse: The Perfect Storm."

Dear Judge Borris:

In accordance with Penal Code sections 933 and 933.5, enclosed please find the response to the Orange County Grand Jury 2011-2012 Report, "Elder Abuse: The Perfect Storm." If you have any questions, please contact Assistant Sheriff Mark Billings at (714) 647-1833.

Respectfully,

Sandra Hutchens
Sheriff-Coroner

cc: Roy B. Baker III, Grand Jury Foreman
Members, Board of Supervisors
Bob Franz, Acting County Executive Officer

550 N. FLOWER STREET, P.O. BOX 449, SANTA ANA, CA 92702-0499 (714) 647-1800

*Integrity without compromise, Service above self, Professionalism in the performance of duty,
Vigilance in safeguarding our community*



ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT
GRAND JURY RESPONSE
ELDER ABUSE: THE PERFECT STORM



Dear members of the Grand Jury,

The Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) has received and reviewed the Orange County Grand Jury report titled Elder Abuse: "The Perfect Storm." The Orange County Sheriff's Department has reviewed the findings and in a collaborative effort with necessary personnel and has prepared the following response.

FINDINGS

F5. A more definitive study is necessary to address four specific concerns within the area of elder abuse:

- A. Oversight over coordination and communication between agencies;**
- B. Outreach and communication to the general public;**
- C. Review of law enforcement and prosecution**
- D. Effective Information Technology to manage data flow.**

Response: *Agrees with findings*

Recommendations

R5. By December 31, 2012, The Sheriff's Department and city police departments should evaluate and update their programs on responding to elder abuse.

Response: *Agrees with recommendations*

Members of the Sheriff's Department have reviewed the elder abuse information in our procedure manual and found it adequate for first responders/patrol. In addition to the current information, we've added the following information to the Family Protection Detail Elder Abuse Investigator's manual;

1. Consider the cognitive status of the victim. A large number of our victims suffer from mental diseases like Dementia and Alzheimer's. Also the type of medication and serious health emergencies can impair the victim's decision making.
2. Consider the likelihood of the undue influence of the caregiver. Most the time the suspect is the caregiver whom the victim relies on to provide all their needs, including companionship. Fearing retaliation, the victim will minimize or deny any wrong doing similar to victim's in cases of domestic violence.



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3. Investigating complex cases of Elder Abuse, where it is difficult to determine if there is in fact a crime, can be difficult and exhaustive. There are numerous factors to be considered when planning our next investigative step. Utilizing the **Elder Abuse Forensic Center** can assist greatly when investigating these types of cases. The following is a synopsis of the Elder Abuse Forensic Center and how to best utilize this resource;

The Elder Abuse Forensic Center of Orange County changes the way elder abuse cases are addressed and prosecuted. The Center is made up of a team of legal, medical, social services, and law enforcement professionals working together on complicated cases of abuse and neglect brought by participating agencies. Team members meet on a weekly basis and:

- Conduct multi-agency case reviews and develop action plans
- Make in-home medical and mental status evaluations
- Conduct in-home evidentiary investigations
- Collaborate on trainings
- Collaborate on research studies based on questions arising from Elder Abuse, and disseminate findings for use by others in the field Elder Abuse
- Consult on strategies for addressing cases and replicate the Elder Abuse Forensic Center model

The Orange County Sheriff's Department will continue to review procedures and implement changes that will increase the effectiveness of first responders and investigations, which would result in the successful prosecution of suspected Elder Abusers.