



## Westminster Police Department

Kevin Baker, Chief of Police

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www.westminster-ca.gov

September 26, 2012

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

Dear Judge Borris,

Enclosed is a copy of the Westminster Police Department's response to the 2011-2012 Orange County Grand Jury report, "Elder Abuse: The Perfect Storm". This response was in conformance with Penal Code 933 and 933.05(a) and (b). If you have any questions, please contact Detective Bureau Lieutenant Bill Collins at (714) 548-3828 who will assist you.

Sincerely,

KEVIN BAKER  
Chief of Police

Enclosure

Cc. 2011-2012 Orange County Grand Jury



### Finding and Conclusions

**F1.** Elder Abuse has been rising and will probably increase because of projected expansion in the population partially due to the influx of baby boomers.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding**

**F3.** Reviewing procedures in law enforcement agencies, law enforcement academies under Orange County government jurisdiction and the District Attorney's office could improve recognition of elder abuse.

**Response: The respondent agrees with the finding**

Our austere budget restraints combined with increased part one crimes, increases the opportunity for elder abuse cases to be overlooked. A review of the procedures of Orange County agencies would enable us to assess the best current practices available in serving the elderly and emphasize the responsibility to remain vigilant in handling elder abuse cases.

The Westminster Police Department has in place a formal policy that defines elder abuse, the mandatory reporting requirements for officers, and it outlines the systematic manner in which it is investigated. The structure of our policy, and depth of commitment to investigating elder abuse, is reinforced with collaborative relationships with Adult Protective Services (APS) and the County of Orange Health Care Agency. The Westminster Police Department has worked jointly with APS for several years. A senior social worker (SSW) from APS meets once a week at WPD with two detectives assigned to the investigation of elder abuse. She reviews all the cases involving elderly abuse. Together they discuss the cases, assess the needs and make appropriate referrals for each case.

The Westminster Police Department has also partnered with the County of Orange Health Care Agency. An in-house mental health Specialist has been working with officers in the field and with detectives for approximately the last 7 years. The specialist responds directly with patrol officers on calls involving the mentally ill and conducts follow up evaluations. In addition, the specialist also aides the Patrol Division on calls involving the elderly. The assistance generally involves: a preliminary mental health assessment; streamlined communication with Adult Protective Services and Adult Mental Health Services; and recommendations to patrol for further action.

In the past, elder abuse has been further addressed by detectives presenting classes directly to senior citizens who are susceptible to financial abuse. The Westminster Police Department facilitates that class in conjunction with Westminster Community Services and their outreach programs to seniors.

The department has also hosted numerous Citizen Academy programs where Westminster citizens are made aware of the different forms of abuse facing the elder population. This academy awareness format has also been presented to merchants at the Westminster Mall with specific focus placed on financial elder abuse.



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

**Response: The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be implemented in the future with a time frame.**

Our practice and policy in handling elder abuse cases has several check and balances to insure elder abuse cases are diligently investigated. Elder abuse cases are generated from patrol oriented calls or walk-ins at the front counter. On occasion, Adult Protective Services will forward a report to the Detective Bureau that has not yet been investigated by law enforcement, and a detective will initiate an investigation.

The reports are reviewed by a Patrol Division supervisor and forwarded, via a computerized routing system, to the Detective Bureau. The reports are assigned to the Detective Bureau and reviewed by a detective supervisor. Next, the case is assigned to one of the two detectives assigned, in part, to investigate elder abuse. The cases are assessed and or investigated and re-assigned back to the detective supervisor for approval.

All elder abuse crime reports are forwarded to the District Attorney's office for review. The Records Division monitors the filing status of all the reports forwarded to the District Attorney's office. Lastly, the DA's office routes the report back to the Records Division. The reports are forwarded back to the same detective supervisor that approved the investigation. The supervisor documents the DA refusal, charges issued, or refusal for further investigation. Cases that are rejected for prosecution are discussed with the DA's office as needed.

A senior social worker from Adult Protective Services comes to WPD once a week and queries all crime codes related to elder abuse. The SSW reviews those cases with the detectives. Detectives contact and forward reports, as needed, to the Ombudsman at the California Department of Aging, or the California Department of Health Services.

During this assessment of our procedures it was determined that our Patrol Division had not yet recently received formal updated training on the identification and investigation of elderly abuse. The Detective Bureau, with input from Adult Protective Services, will coordinate with the Professional Standards Unit and provide mandatory training for the Patrol Division during November of 2012.