



## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

### News for Immediate Release

June 16, 2021

#### **Pa. Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts, Elder Justice Partners Host Virtual Town Hall on Understanding and Preventing Elder Abuse**

**HARRISBURG** — Recognizing the importance of identifying and understanding elder abuse for one of Pa.'s most vulnerable populations, the Pa. Advisory Council on Elder Justice in the Courts and its elder justice partners today hosted a virtual town hall discussion on understanding and identifying elder abuse.

“Protecting seniors and vulnerable adults from neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse and financial exploitation begins by recognizing that this could happen to you, your neighbor or your loved ones,” said Pa. Supreme Court Justice Debra Todd. “Paying attention to the warning signs of these harmful practices is absolutely critical, since we know that for every one case of elder abuse that gets reported to authorities, there are often dozens more that never come to light.”

In Pennsylvania, statewide reports of elder abuse have increased by 80 percent over the past five years. Isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to making older Pennsylvanians vulnerable to abuse.

Today's discussion is part one of a two-part virtual town hall discussion aimed at understanding and identifying elder abuse. Part two will follow on June 23, focusing on preventing and responding to financial exploitation.

Panelists that participated in today's virtual-town hall included:

- Hon. Sheila Woods-Skipper, moderator and administrative judge, Orphans' Court Division, Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas
- Mark Levenberg, senior deputy, Pa. Office of Attorney General
- Denise Getgen, director, Adult Protective Services, Pa. Department of Aging
- Leah Finlayson, Esq., director, Victim Services, SeniorLAW Center
- Peggy Oliverio, victim testimonial
- Gerald Sullivan, victim testimonial

Through the discussion, participants heard from both victims and panelists about their experiences with elder abuse, what Pennsylvania's courts and justice partners are doing to

address these issues, how to recognize elder abuse, what to do if abuse is suspected and available resources.

This educational event was made possible by partnerships between the Pa. Department of Aging, Pa. Office of Attorney General, Pa. Department of Banking and Securities, SeniorLAW Center and the Pa. Judiciary.

View the invitation and register for the financial exploitation town hall [here](#).

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