

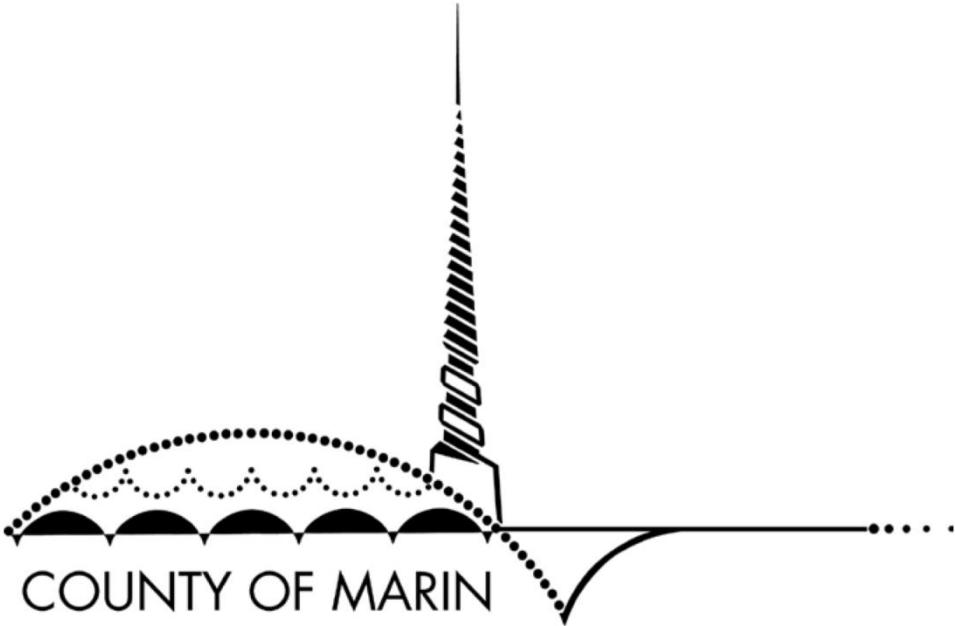
2017-2018 MARIN COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY

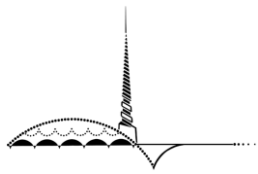
Marin Is Aging

Are We Ready?

Report Date: April 20, 2018

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Marin is Aging: Are We Ready?

SUMMARY

The population of Marin is aging rapidly. Today, 27% of Marin residents are over 60 years old.¹ This number is expected to increase to 34% by 2030. The Marin County Civil Grand Jury was concerned that the County may not be prepared for this rapid demographic shift, and that resources might be lacking for elders in the community. The Jury was particularly concerned about issues relating to elder abuse, which is a growing problem nationwide.

During the investigation the Grand Jury was pleased to find that seniors in Marin County have a wealth of information and services available to them. Marin goes beyond the requirements of both federal and state law by providing additional support and funding to agencies responsible for elder care and awarding grants to nonprofits that also deliver services to elders.

The Board of Supervisors has declared 2018 as the “Year of the Older Adult” with plans for extensive social and educational events throughout the year.

Despite the County’s commitment to this important issue, and the impressive support mechanisms that County agencies have in place, there still remain some areas where improvements can be made.

¹ [“Category: Aging Action Initiative.” aginginmarin.org.](http://aginginmarin.org)

BACKGROUND

Statistics

Based on projections by the State of California, the population of Marin residents aged 65 and older will number 100,990 by 2030, and peak at 106,177 in 2040.

Total Estimated and Projected Population for Marin County: 2010 to 20160 in 5-year Increments²									
Age Group	Estimates	Projections							
	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055
65-69	18,817	18,963	18,670	18,061	18,177	17,065	14,568	13,549	12,956
70-74	13,694	17,896	18,253	18,070	17,579	17,768	16,766	14,342	13,383
75-79	8,537	12,563	16,686	17,192	17,155	16,785	17,082	16,212	13,922
80-84	5,963	7,429	11,124	14,969	15,633	15,767	15,615	15,970	15,350
85-89	4,492	4,865	6,126	9,239	12,648	13,432	13,778	13,769	14,264
90-94	2,105	2,530	2,776	3,654	5,698	7,943	8,570	9,063	9,074
95-99	514	681	813	991	1,364	2,165	3,053	3,319	3,573
100+	37	93	117	172	217	345	578	871	1,018
Total 65+	73,899 (28%)	84,372 (32%)	93,184 (34%)	100,990 (37%)	105,943 (38%)	106,177 (38%)	103,870 (37%)	100,331 (36%)	98,248 (36%)
Total Population	262,105	267,020	270,747	274,243	277,316	278,955	278,811	277,335	275,223

² "Total Estimated and Projected Population for California Counties: July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2060 in 5-year Increments." Accessed on December 19, 2017.

APPROACH

The Grand Jury originally focused on the problem of elder abuse, but found it most instructive to put that examination into the context of Marin's overall preparedness for a rapidly-aging population. The Jury studied programs addressing aging worldwide, nationwide, in California, and in Marin County itself.

In researching elder issues, the Grand Jury:

- Examined extensive professional research reports as well as articles in the general media.
- Consulted with individuals and agencies involved with elder issues in Marin and other northern California counties, including experts in dementia, shelters for abused victims, elected officials, and legal experts.
- Interviewed first responders from Marin County police and fire departments.
- Interviewed a community religious leader.
- Examined legal issues relating to elder abuse and elder care.

DISCUSSION

Preparing for an Aging Population — Worldwide

Communities around the world are preparing for an aging population by taking the guidance of the World Health Organization (WHO) and creating age-friendly cities, towns and counties that:

- Recognize the wide range of capacities and resources among older people.
- Anticipate and respond flexibly to aging-related needs and preferences.
- Respect older people’s decisions and lifestyle choices.
- Protect those who are most vulnerable.
- Promote older people’s inclusion in and contribution to all areas of community life.³

The WHO initiative proposes eight age-friendly topics for inclusion:⁴

- Housing
- Social participation
- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and employment
- Communication and information
- Community support and health services
- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transportation

Preparing for an Aging Population — The Federal Government

Federal law provides for adult protective services and grant programs. “The Secretary shall ensure that the Department of Health and Human Services ... provides funding authorized by this part to State and local adult protective services offices that investigate reports of the abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders...”⁵

The National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA) serves as a national resource center dedicated to the prevention of elder mistreatment. First established by the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) in 1988 as a national elder abuse resource center, the NCEA was granted a permanent home at AoA in the 1992 amendments made to Title II of the Older Americans Act.⁶

The Elder Justice Act was signed into law by President Obama on March 23, 2010, as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.⁷ It provides federal resources to “prevent, detect, treat, understand, intervene in and, where appropriate, prosecute elder abuse, neglect and exploitation.”

The text above refers to just some of the laws and programs in place to help and protect seniors.

³ “[Age Friendly Practices](#).” *World Health Organization*.

⁴ “[Global Age-Friendly Cities, a Guide](#).” *World Health Organization*.

⁵ “[Federal Law 42 U.S Code § 139m-1](#).” *US Government Publishing Office*.

⁶ “[What We Do](#).” *National Center On Elder Abuse*.

⁷ “[Elder Justice Act](#).” *Oklahoma Department of Human Services*.

Preparing for an Aging Population — State of California

The State of California appears to be actively supporting elders through state laws, initiatives and agencies with the assistance of nonprofits.

California Commission on Aging

The California Commission on Aging serves as the state’s principal advocate for older adults. Its primary purpose is to advance issues fundamental to ensuring healthy, purposeful and dignified longevity for all Californians.

The Commission on Aging advises the state’s Governor and Legislature, along with federal, state, and local agencies, on programs and services that affect older adults. Additionally, the Commission works closely with public, nonprofit, and private-sector institutions to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

Established in 1973 by a California government mandate and confirmed in the Older Californians Act, the Commission is comprised of 23 volunteer commissioners (a majority of whom are over 60 years old) representing diverse fields related to aging. Commissioners serve three-year terms and are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the Assembly, or by the Senate Rules Committee.⁸

California Department of Aging

The California Department of Aging (CDA) administers programs that serve older adults. The Department contracts with the network of Area Agencies on Aging, which directly manages a wide array of federal-and state-funded services that help older adults find employment, support older and disabled individuals to live as independently as possible in the community, promote healthy aging and community involvement, and assist family members in their vital caregiving role.

Elder Abuse

In California, elders are defined as persons 65 years and older. Under California law, elder abuse can be both criminal and civil.

As far back as 2002 the California Department of Justice partnered with AARP to develop a guide to preventing and reporting elder abuse.⁹

⁸ [“Your Advocate.”](#) *California Commission on Aging.*

⁹ [“A Citizen’s Guide to Preventing and Reporting Elder Abuse.”](#) *California Department of Justice.*

Preparing for an Aging Population — Marin County

Year of the Older Adult

In January, the Marin County Board of Supervisors proclaimed 2018 as the “Year of the Older Adult.”

The stated goals of this project are to:

- Promote Marin as a great place to age.
- Bring all ages together to understand and celebrate the social, cultural, and economic contributions of Marin’s older adults.
- Raise community awareness of ageism affecting the opportunities that an older population brings to Marin.
- Align and showcase collaborations between and among neighbors, businesses, government, education, and community organizations to expand opportunities for older adults.
- Identify new strategies, programs, and resources to support and address the needs of Marin’s older population.¹⁰

The Board of Supervisors has published a 2018 calendar of events that will take place at least monthly to bring attention to these goals.

Age-Friendly Communities

AARP has an initiative affiliated with WHO with the same objective of identifying age-friendly communities. Marin County has an age-friendly planning committee aimed at guiding cities and towns through the process. Currently, five communities in Marin have received the Age-Friendly designation from both WHO and AARP: Sausalito (2013), Corte Madera (2015), Fairfax (2015), San Rafael (2017), and Novato (2017). Mill Valley, Larkspur, San Anselmo, Tiburon, and the district of Tam Valley are currently working toward this designation.

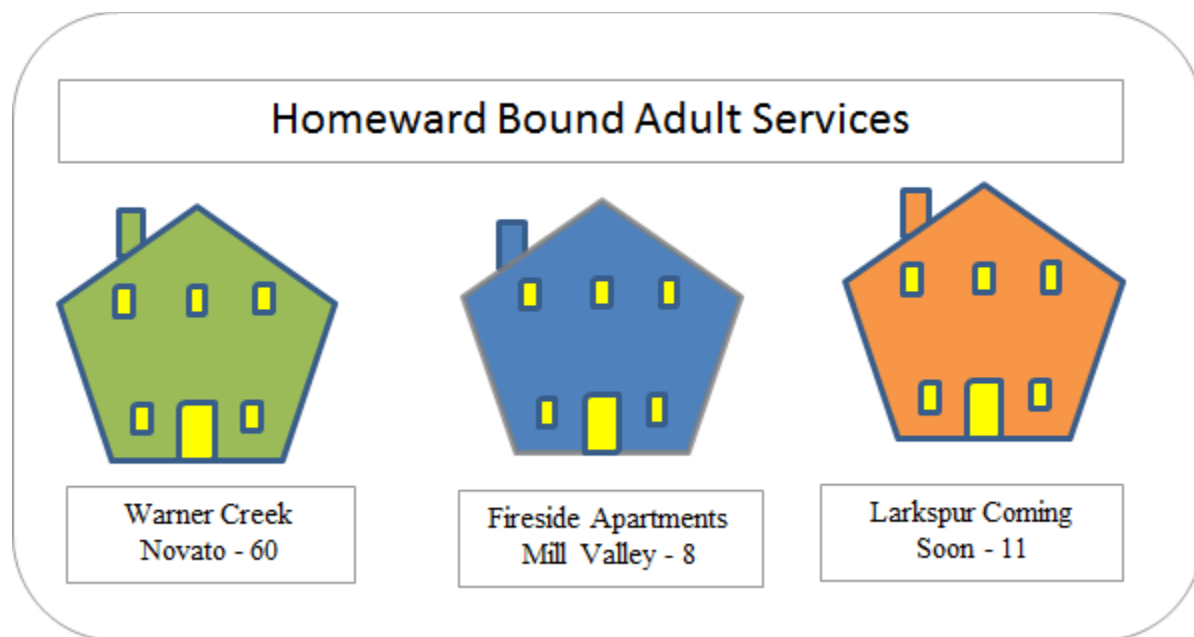
¹⁰ [“Year of the Older Adult.”](#) *Marin County Board of Supervisors.*

Programs for Elders Provided by Nonprofits

Homeward Bound

Homeward Bound of Marin is the primary provider of Marin County homeless shelters and services for homeless families and individuals.

Homeward Bound also has a program that is currently providing permanent supportive housing to 60 homeless seniors (62+) in Novato¹¹ and eight in Mill Valley. Another program, which will serve an additional 11 homeless seniors, has passed the first stages of an approval process in Larkspur. The residents in the new program will be referred by the Marin Housing Authority from a list of seniors eligible for “housing choice”, also called Section 8, subsidies that allow them to pay 30% of their income in rent.¹²



Marin Villages

The “Village” concept, born in Boston in 2001, is designed to give elders the ability to continue living at home by providing basic services, such as transportation and assistance with home maintenance, as well as providing social, cultural, and educational opportunities in the community. In response to a 2007 Grand Jury Report on aging in Marin, Marin Villages was formed as a nonprofit umbrella for individual “Villages” in the County. Currently, Homestead Valley, Mill Valley, San Rafael, Novato, Ross Valley, Tiburon Peninsula, and Twin Cities participate in Marin Villages, and Sausalito Village operates independently.¹³ Members pay a modest annual fee and can request services as needed. Volunteers are vetted and sign up for services they would like to provide. An efficient online dashboard coordinates requests with volunteers. Many participants are both members and volunteers who can provide and receive services. “Villages” are growing and changing with the needs of the community and are a vital part of the age-friendly movement.

¹¹ [“Warner Creek Senior Housing.”](#) *Eden Housing.*

¹² [“Larkspur Partnership Offers Senior Housing.”](#) *Homeward Bound of Marin.*

¹³ [“Welcome to Marin Villages.”](#) *Marin Villages.*

Whistlestop

“Founded in 1954 as Marin Senior Coordinating Council, Whistlestop promotes the independence, well-being and quality of life for older adults and people living with disabilities in Marin County. Whistlestop’s Active Aging Center provides nutritious meals, educational classes, multicultural gatherings and helpful information and referral services. Whistlestop also provides special needs transportation services through Marin Access, a partnership of Whistlestop, Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit.”¹⁴

Senior Access

Senior Access provides day activity programs for elders with memory loss that benefit both the elder and the family members who care for them. Their services include: an adult day program with therapeutic exercise, art and other activities; memory screenings; and day excursions for those with early-stage memory loss. It also provides respite, support groups, and educational workshops for family caregivers.¹⁵

Alzheimer’s Association

The Alzheimer’s Association of Northern California and Northern Nevada has an office in San Rafael that provides information, education, and support groups for people with dementia, their families and caregivers. The 24/7 helpline can match the needs of dementia sufferers with various services meant to smooth the way. The Alzheimer’s Association also has a training program for professionals who work with people with dementia.¹⁶

Services for Elders Provided by the County of Marin

Marin Aging and Adult Services, a division of Health and Human Services (HHS), provides an information telephone line (415-457-4636) that is answered by a person (not a recording) who can direct elders to appropriate services throughout the County. Someone is always available during regular business hours.¹⁷

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is set up to administer federal dollars that come to the County for elder services. Most of these funds are contracted out to nonprofits in the community. The AAA is the leading administrator and funder of services for persons over 60 and family caregivers in Marin County.¹⁸

Adult Protective Services (APS) provides an array of services for elders that will be discussed later under the topic of elder abuse.

¹⁴ “[Welcome to Whistlestop.](http://whistlestop.org)” *whistlestop.org*.

¹⁵ “[Senior Access.](http://senioraccess.org)” *senioraccess.org*.

¹⁶ “[Alzheimer’s Association.](http://alz.org)” *alz.org*.

¹⁷ “[Aging and Adult Services.](#)” *Marin Health & Human Services*.

¹⁸ “[Area Agency on Aging.](#)” *Marin Health & Human Services*.

First Responders

Marin's law enforcement and fire departments' training goes beyond minimum requirements for responding to the needs of elders.

- When possible, law enforcement responds to 911 calls along with the firefighters.
- Marin has a high percentage of firefighters who are either EMTs or paramedics.
- Recognizing signs of abuse and neglect are part of annual training.
- All EMTs and paramedics are required to complete relevant Continuing Education courses every two years.
- All first responders answering 911 calls are trained to recognize and be sensitive to elders with dementia.

Public employees, such as sheriff's deputies, police officers, firefighters, paramedics, and EMTs, often come into contact with individuals suffering from dementia at times of extreme crisis. If the special needs of these individuals are not well understood the results can be tragic. Training in the management of people with dementia is invaluable in assisting first responders to take appropriate action to ensure the health and safety of these individuals.

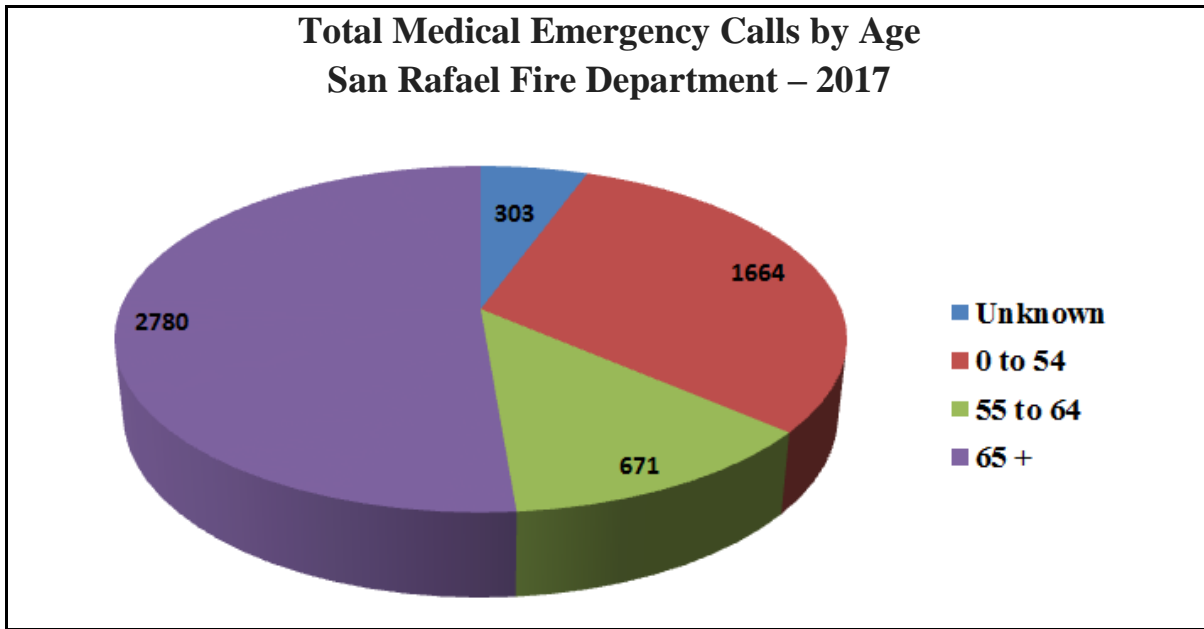
The Grand Jury found that the training of City and County law enforcement and fire department personnel is exceptional and contains special training regarding the elderly, including how to recognize signs of dementia.

When elder abuse is suspected, all first responders work closely with APS by both providing information at the time of the call and later contacting APS when appropriate.

In July 2014, the San Rafael Fire Department, supported by Senior Access, initiated the "First Responder Referral Project," which allows first responders to refer the caller to agencies that may provide additional help. The program was then rolled out countywide in cooperation with the Marin County Fire Chiefs Association.¹⁹

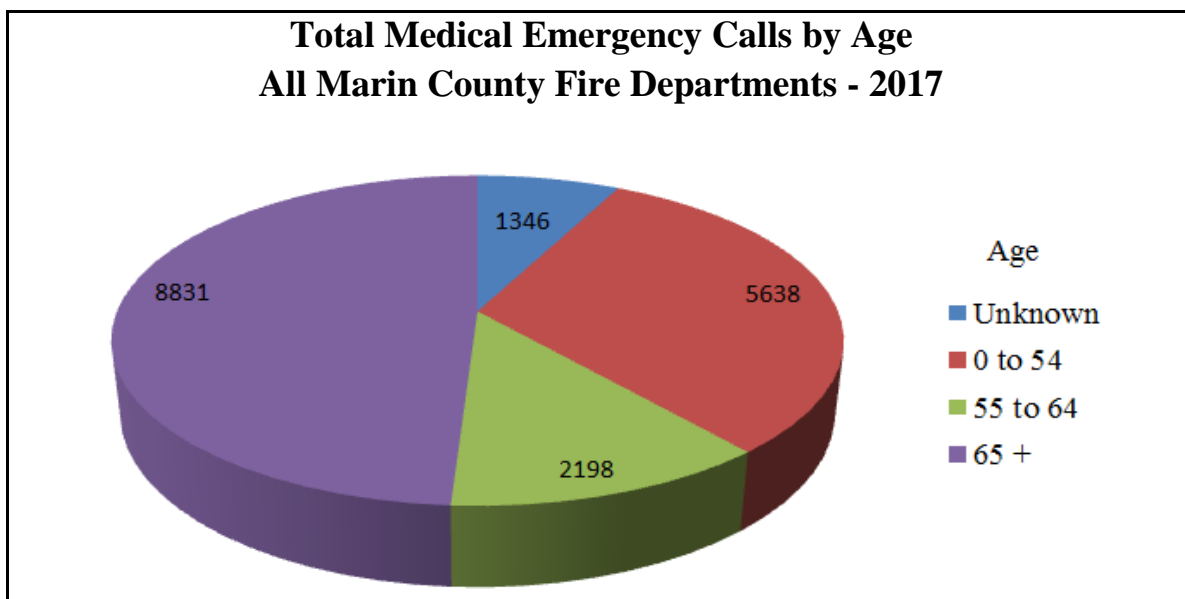
In San Rafael, just over half of all 911 calls are in response to persons 65+ years of age.

¹⁹ Gray, Christopher R. and Phegan, Barry. "[Marin Voice: Taking First Response a Step Further](#)." *Marin Independent Journal*. 26 Oct. 2015.



The Marin County Fire Department mostly covers the coast, all the way to Sonoma. The department has two permanent ambulances and one seasonal ambulance. Southern Marin has four ambulances. San Rafael and Novato, the two most populated cities in Marin, each have two ambulances available at all times. Ross Valley has one in Corte Madera and one in Ross. There are a total of 13 ambulances staffed with paramedics in Marin County.

The Marin County Fire Department gathers the overall statistics for the County’s fire departments. In 2017, there were a total of 18,013 medical emergency calls, including 5,418 (30%) from San Rafael. Statistics from the Sheriff’s department are not gathered by age so information on ages is not available.



The Problem of Elder Abuse

Mistreatment of older people — referred to as “elder abuse” — was first described in British scientific journals in 1975 under the term “granny battering.”²⁰ Elder abuse includes physical abuse, neglect, self-neglect, financial abuse, abandonment, isolation, abduction or other mistreatment that results in physical harm or pain or mental suffering, and/or the lack of adequate care necessary to avoid physical harm or mental suffering. With age, most adults become less capable both physically and mentally, and become more vulnerable to such abuse. This can occur whether living in a private residence or in a care facility.

This report focuses on elder abuse that occurs outside of licensed facilities, e.g., abuse perpetrated by in-home caregivers, institutions, relatives, strangers, fiduciary advisors, and/or individual self-neglect. The Grand Jury did not examine long-term residential facilities, which are monitored by the APS Ombudsman.

Statistics gathered by NCOA show that a significant number of elders are, or will be, subject to some sort of elder abuse. The NCOA estimates as many as 1-in-14 such cases are unreported.²¹

Statistics can vary broadly depending on the region and local culture as well as the point-in-time. “The frequency of occurrence of elder mistreatment will undoubtedly increase over the next several decades, as the population ages.”²²

The National Center on Elder Abuse reported the troubling findings of a New York Study that estimated as many as 1 in 24 cases of elder abuse go unreported. See the quoted text below:²³

²⁰ Burston GR. “Granny Battering.” *British Medical Journal*. 1975, 3:592.

²¹ “[Elder Abuse Facts](#).” *National Council on Aging*.

²² “[Elder Mistreatment](#).” *Washington (DC). National Academies Press (US)*, 2003.

²³ “[What is Known about the Incidence and Prevalence of Elder Abuse in the Community Setting?](#)” *National Center on Elder Abuse*.

What is Known about the Incidence and Prevalence of Elder Abuse in the Community Setting?

Statistics on Elder Abuse

Unfortunately, we simply do not know for certain how many people are suffering from elder abuse and neglect. Signs of elder abuse may be missed by professionals working with older Americans because of lack of awareness and adequate training on detecting abuse. The elderly may be reluctant to report abuse themselves because of fear of retaliation, lack of physical and/or cognitive ability to report, or because they do not want to get the abuser in trouble.

Prevalence

Below is a sampling of findings that show what is known about the incidence and prevalence of elder abuse and neglect. Keep in mind that the studies referenced employ a variety of research methods and operational definitions and are based in various geographic areas across the United States.

- A comprehensive review article found the prevalence of elder abuse to be approximately 10% including physical abuse, psychological or verbal abuse, sexual abuse, financial exploitation, and neglect.
- In a study on elder abuse by family members in which data was collected by elder abuse type, Laumann and colleagues found that respondents most frequently reported verbal mistreatment (9%), followed by financial mistreatment (3.5%), and lastly physical mistreatment (less than 1%).
- A groundbreaking study based in New York estimated that 260,000 (1 in 13) older adults in the state of New York had been victims of at least one form of elder abuse in the preceding year. This study found that major financial exploitation was self-reported at a rate of 41 per 1,000 surveyed, which was higher than self-reported rates of emotional, physical, and sexual abuse or neglect.
- Available data from state Adult Protective Services (APS) agencies show an increasing trend in the reporting of elder abuse.
- Elder abuse is also underreported. The New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study found that for every case known to programs and agencies, 24 were unknown.

In light of these elder abuse statistics, the Grand Jury elected to investigate the services and protections available to the elder population in Marin County and how they might be improved.

County Services Regarding Elder Abuse

Adult Protective Services

Adult Protective Services, a division of the Department of Health and Human Services, is devoted to the protection of elders. During regular business hours, a phone line dedicated to elder abuse reports (415-473-2774) is answered by a person able to direct the caller to appropriate services.

When a call reporting elder abuse is made to APS, the following is provided:

- Consultation
- Referral to appropriate community-based agencies
- APS investigation

APS provides social services, such as:

- Information and support related to elder abuse.
- Information and support related to dependent adult abuse.
- In-home health services for elders who are homebound.
- Social workers who will coordinate services with available family, supportive friends and community resources.
- Support and investigation into financial abuse through the Financial Abuse Specialist Team²⁴ coordinated by the Elder Financial Protection Network (EFPN).²⁵
- An Ombudsman who investigates elder abuse complaints in long-term-care facilities, assisted-living facilities and residential-care facilities for the elderly.

District Attorney

On October 2, 2006, the Marin County District Attorney's Office (DA) began publicizing the new elder abuse prevention information line at APS with posters on Golden Gate Transit buses and bus shelters.

The DA is collaborating with many agencies and community-based organizations to address the subject of elder abuse in this community, whether it stems from neglect, physical abuse, or financial fraud. Staff continues to do presentations at senior-living facilities discussing potential scams touching seniors.

A program to address real estate fraud has been instituted, which allows the DA's office to investigate suspicious document filings reported to them by the Recorder's office.

The DA's office is a member of the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) composed of law enforcement, prosecution, and public sector agencies charged with protecting and safeguarding seniors.

²⁴ "[Elder Abuse Program](#)," *Marin County F.A.S.T.*

²⁵ "[Learn All You Need to Know about Elder Financial Abuse](#)," *Elder Financial Protection Network*.

Financial Abuse

Elder Financial Abuse and the Law

Despite the growing number of elder abuse cases nationwide, there is a lack of corresponding attention in the law field. While civil lawsuits are currently the most likely avenue for victimized elders to receive restitution for financial abuse by caregivers, family members, unscrupulous financial advisers or scammers that prey on the elderly, private attorneys have yet to take up the cause.²⁶ Therefore, the task of representing vulnerable seniors often falls to legal aid attorneys.

The short- and long-term effects of financial abuse are many, including a decline in health leading to early death, dependence on social service agencies, the inability to afford medications, and an increased risk of ending up in the hospital.²⁷

Further complicating matters is the reluctance of an abused senior to come forward in fear of losing independence or sending a loved one, on whom they may depend for activities of daily living, to jail. In some cases, seniors may not even know they have been abused due to cognitive impairments, which might also make them unreliable witnesses.²⁸

Victims who receive restitution are more likely to recover from the abuse. However, fewer than 15% of victims recover stolen assets, according to research.²⁹ There are several effective tools, including restraining orders, which come with a penalty of jail time when violated. However, unless law enforcement acts, perpetrators who are unafraid of the consequences can still get away with their crimes.³⁰

FAST Program Run by Health and Human Services

The Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) is a multidisciplinary team of public agency representatives and private professionals from the financial services industry. FAST was formed in Marin in 2005 to provide expert forensic assistance in the investigation of complex cases of suspected elder financial abuse. FAST also works to raise public awareness, and provides community education through professional training programs.³¹

²⁶ Andres, Matthew N. "[Making Elder Financial Exploitation Cases Part of a Sustainable Practice: Tips from the Experiences of the University of Illinois College of Law Elder Financial Clinic.](#)" *Elder Law Journal*. Page 298.

²⁷ [Ibid.](#) Page 305.

²⁸ [Ibid.](#) Page 310.

²⁹ [Ibid.](#) Page 334.

³⁰ [Ibid.](#) Page 313.

³¹ "[Elder Abuse Program.](#)" *Marin County District Attorney's Office*.

Elder Shelters

In spite of a surging population of seniors in this nation, only seven states provide some form of elder shelter for seniors in need: California, Connecticut, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, and Rhode Island.

Elder shelters are particularly needed in cases of elder abuse. One in ten seniors have suffered some form of abuse at least once. The number of seniors abused, exploited, or neglected is estimated to be around two million, although many incidents of elder abuse go unreported.³²

Most of the states named offer one elder shelter that provides 30-90 day emergency stays. During the sheltered stay, elderly abuse victims are provided medical, psychological, and legal help, with the goal of finding permanent housing for residents.

Examples of Elder Shelters

Oklahoma

In Oklahoma, an Elder Emergency Shelter is available for seniors who have experienced abuse, neglect, self-neglect and/or financial exploitation as well as homelessness due to mental illness or catastrophic medical expenses. It has been shown that around 35% of the shelter residents were veterans.

The goal of this elder shelter is to find permanent housing for residents within 30 days. Sunbeam Family Services has a 94% success rate in finding permanent housing for shelter residents.³³

³² [“Elder Abuse, Use of Shelters Rising.”](#) *USA Today*. 27 January 2013.

³³ [“A Stepping Stone to Home.”](#) *Sunbeam Family Services*.

California

The state's only shelter for at-risk elders, Senior Safe House in Sacramento, is almost fully supported by APS in conjunction with Volunteers of America.

Sacramento Senior Safe House



The Senior Safe House³⁴ in Sacramento provides shelter for at-risk elders in crisis. In 2017, 60% of the shelter's residents were referrals from APS. Hospitals referred 5%, while 3% were referred by other homeless programs. Other referral sources include clergy, bank employees, community social services agencies, private citizens, and self-referrals. About 3% are referrals due to family violence and another 9% are crime victims.

The Safe House, staffed 24 hours a day, is limited to six beds, resulting in one or two people being turned away each day. Any additional beds would require special permits and additional staffing. Senior residents can stay up to 90 days, after which time APS helps find housing, typically a one-bedroom rental. On average, the length of stay at Senior Safe House is 20 days. No special services are provided to residents on-site, but transportation is available to take residents to appropriate APS-provided services.

During 2017, Senior Safe House had a total of 101 seniors housed in-residence, split nearly evenly between men and women, with an average age of 72 years. One-quarter of residents were veterans. Most (81%) were Sacramento residents. One-quarter had mild-to-moderate dementia, one-third of the residents had mental health issues, and 4% had developmental disability.

Sacramento has shown how much it values and recognizes the need for the services of the Senior Safe House through the many volunteers who show up daily and by the community's valuable ongoing support.

³⁴ ["Sacramento Senior Safe House."](#) [Video.] *Volunteers of America*. 13 Aug. 2009.

What Still Needs to be Done

Outreach and Technology

A concern remains about today's dependence on technology. Many elderly people either are not familiar with newer technology or may not be in the future as aging takes its toll on memory. The elderly are not as inclined to have their cell phones within reach, and they may not be able to hear alerts from outside, making dependence on neighbors increasingly important, especially in the case of emergencies.

Another concern is the lack of landlines, not only for elders but the general population as Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) and cell phones cannot receive emergency alerts unless the owner registers their number.³⁵

Mental Health

The passage of Proposition 63 (now known as the Mental Health Services Act or MHSA) in November 2004, authorizes the California Department of Mental Health (DMH) to provide increased funding, personnel and other resources to support county mental health programs and monitor progress toward statewide goals for children, transition-age youth, adults, older adults and families.³⁶ Of the funds allocated for prevention and early interventions, only 2-3% went to helping older adults, who represent 27% of Marin's population.

Although these funds are intended for the benefit of all Marin residents, they do not provide for seniors suffering from dementia or Alzheimer's disease. Both of these conditions affect the cognitive abilities of many elders to the extent that they cannot function on their own, yet they are not considered mentally ill. The State of California mandates the MHSA money be spent solely on mental health. Therefore, none of the Proposition 63 funding that goes to Marin can be used for services to elders with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

During the MHSA Report, delivered September 19, 2017 at the Board of Supervisors meeting,³⁷ HHS pointed out that because dementia is classified as a *physical* illness it is not covered under MHSA, for which services apply only to *mental* illness. Even though dementia may be co-occurring with mental illnesses, such as depression or alcoholism, significant state funding available through MHSA is not eligible for use by those suffering with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

³⁵ [“AlertMarin Emergency Notification Registration.”](#) Marin County Sheriff's Office.

³⁶ [“Mental Health Services Act.”](#) California Department of Health Care Services.

³⁷ [“Regular Meeting of the Marin County Board of Supervisors.”](#) [Video.] County of Marin. 19 Sept. 2017.

Elder Shelter

At present, Marin County has no designated senior shelter. In an emergency situation, Adult Protective Services may place abused or at-risk elders in temporary housing, such as hotels or motels. Although the stay is usually short-term and social workers provide needed services — such as transportation and meal delivery — not all seniors dealing with a crisis situation would be best served left alone in a motel.

Currently, this remedy is only working because of the low need, but that could change as the elder population grows.

A preferable option is to have a safe house for at-risk elders to provide temporary housing that would allow the elder to find a more permanent solution.

This could be accomplished in several ways:

- Provide a bed in a residential care facility.
- Establish a network of screened homes where an elder could be sheltered, similar to emergency foster housing for children who are removed from an unsafe environment.
- Work with a nonprofit to establish and run a safe house similar to the one in Sacramento.
- Identify and work with a nearby county to establish a shared safe house.

Not all of the residents at the Sacramento Safe House were victims of abuse. Some seniors were priced out of their housing and thus became homeless. The Safe House provided respite, time in a safe place, and assistance in arranging for permanent housing.

The problem of housing is not new in Marin. With the elder population growing and the cost of housing rising, it is important to ensure that elders are not displaced unnecessarily in Marin.

An Elder Shelter Program is needed for the County of Marin to provide shelter for at-risk elders. The primary objectives and purposes of this program would be to:

- Provide emergency housing for elders who agree to be removed from abusive situations.
- Provide transition care for elder abuse and crime victims striving for self-reliance.
- Provide resources to prevent and reduce the risk of abuse and crime in elders' lives through referrals for advocacy, counseling, mediation, and legal representation.
- Engage in outreach to diverse communities to provide culturally-appropriate emergency housing and services for elder abuse victims.
- Reduce suffering and facilitate recovery for all elder abuse victims.
- Provide education and training to the general public, mandated reporters, and other professionals to increase awareness and reporting of elder abuse and increase advocacy for elder victims.³⁸

³⁸ Elder Abuse Services, Inc. May 13, 2016

FINDINGS

- F1. Marin County is very progressive in providing information and support for elders.
- F2. Marin County and many of its cities are actively working to make Marin a more age-friendly county.
- F3. Marin County's first responders are exceptionally well-trained in providing help to elders.
- F4. Marin County does not have adequate shelter facilities for seniors in crisis.
- F5. Many Marin County seniors are not technologically savvy, and therefore may not have their phones properly registered for emergency services.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The Board of Supervisors should request that HHS include information about how to register cell phones and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) phones for emergency alerts as part of community outreach.
- R2. The District Attorney should include registration of VOIP and cell phones in the DA's outreach program.
- R3. Marin County should develop a plan for a designated elder shelter.
- R4. The Board of Supervisors should actively lobby State Legislators to allow MHSA funds to be used to help elders with mental illness and co-occurring dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

REQUEST FOR RESPONSES

From the following governing body:

- Marin County Board of Supervisors (R1, R3, R4)

The governing body indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the governing body must be conducted in accordance with Penal Code section 933 (c) and subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting requirements of the Brown Act.

From the following individuals:

- Marin County District Attorney (R2)

Note: At the time this report was prepared information was available at the websites listed.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury. The California State Legislature has stated that it intends the provisions of Penal Code Section 929 prohibiting disclosure of witness identities to encourage full candor in testimony in Grand Jury investigations by protecting the privacy and confidentiality of those who participate in any Civil Grand Jury investigation.

APPENDIX I

The 2018 **Marin Year of the Older Adult**³⁹ will include a year-long calendar of events and programs focusing on the vitality, contributions and challenges of Marin’s older adult residents. The program will also initiate new policies, programs and resources to promote an age-friendly Marin County.



Project Goals

1. Promote Marin as a great place to grow old
2. Bring all ages together to understand and celebrate the social, cultural and economic contributions of Marin’s older adults
3. Raise community awareness of ageism affecting the opportunities that an older population bring to Marin
4. Align and showcase collaborations between and among neighbors, businesses, government, education and community organizations to expand opportunities for older adults
5. Identify new strategies, programs, and resources to support and address the needs of Marin’s older population.

³⁹ [“Year of the Older Adult.”](#) *Marin County Board of Supervisors.*