

Reports of elder abuse and neglect expected to go up in West Virginia

Written by Australian Business

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Older Americans are among the most vulnerable members of our population. As our loved ones age, we expect them to be well taken care of and to be treated with the respect they have earned over the course of their long lives. But, it is not always possible to see to the needs of an aging loved one without professional help. Sometimes, caregivers of our aging loved ones betray the great responsibility they have been entrusted with, leading to neglect, and in some cases outright physical abuse.

Population over age 65 expected to increase by more than 150,000 by 2020

The West Virginia Bureau of Children and Families is the state government agency that, among other things, looks into cases of elder abuse and neglect. According to the Bureau of Children and Families, last year there were 14,775 referrals of suspected elder abuse and neglect. The agency was only able to investigate about 6,000 of these cases.

Sometimes, elder abuse is a matter of intentional misconduct by nursing home staff or other caregivers. However, neglect can be just as dangerous and harmful to your loved one as outright abuse. As more West Virginians become in need of care and nursing homes become increasingly overcrowded, there will be a greater potential for staff to miss important things.

Presently, the population of West Virginia is 1,855,800. According to the Bureau of Children and Families, 16.8 percent of the population is 65 or older, more than 311,000 people. In 17 years, the population of West Virginia is projected to increase to about 1.9 million. But, the Bureau of Children and Families reports that the growth in the senior demographic will far outpace the general increase in population; by 2020, 24.8 percent of West Virginia's population will be 65 or older, which will be nearly half a million people. Nationwide, only about 20 percent of the population is expected to be age 65 or over in 17 years.

A nursing home abuse attorney can help you address your loved one's problem

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There are already a high number of elder abuse reports in West Virginia. With the population of West Virginians over the age of 65 increasing substantially over the coming years, the problem is likely to get worse.

If your loved one has been the victim of elder abuse or neglect, you do not have to wait for a state agency to act to set things right. In fact, while the West Virginia Bureau of Children and Families can investigate elder abuse and impose certain government sanctions on those responsible, the agency cannot secure the monetary damages to which you and your loved one may be entitled.

A nursing home abuse attorney can help you pursue a legal claim against negligent or abusive caregivers for monetary compensation. Ensure that your loved one gets the good care that he or she deserves, and hold negligent or abusive caregivers accountable for their actions: get in touch with an elder abuse attorney today.