



## Senior Tar Heel Legislature

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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March 24, 2014

### **Elder Abuse Cases Expected to Increase in Coming Years** *Efforts Underway to Reduce Abuse Among Older Adults*

Raleigh, NC – The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (STHL) convened in Raleigh March 20-21 for its first meeting of 2014. During the meeting, leaders shared information regarding the rise in elder abuse cases in North Carolina. As one of the STHLs five legislative priorities, the information proved to be very useful for the group's advocacy efforts to strengthen and fund the state's Adult Protective Services (APS) program.



**Dennis Streets, Director, NC Division of Aging and Adult Services speaks to STHL about Elder Abuse.**

Dennis Streets, Director of the North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS), stated that the total APS reports increased by 54 percent from 2007 to 2013; from about 14,200 to nearly 21,800. APS provides protective services to adults 18 years and older who are abused, neglected, and exploited. In addition, due to the aging of the population, APS reports are projected to continue to increase in the coming years; however, during the last session of the North Carolina General Assembly, the final state budget reduced Social Services Block Grant for Adult Protective Services by \$100,684. This was the only state funding allocated to support APS. In an effort to protect older adults from financial exploitation DAAS is partnering with the Governor's Council on Aging, Attorney General's office, State Employees Credit Union, County Social Service Directors, Area Agencies on Aging, and others to promote an educational campaign called *Money Smart for Older Adults*.

Nancy Warren, Adult Services Program Administrator for DAAS, added that financial institutions are mandated to report any suspected financial abuse. Warren stated "North Carolina was one of the first states to pass elder abuse laws and that one in 13 community dwelling adults aged 60 and higher reported some form of abuse within the previous 12 months." In addition, abused older adults are three times more likely to die compared to their non-abused cohorts. Warren thanked the STHL for supporting the state's efforts to strengthen and fund the APS program.

Elder Abuse Awareness is being promoted from May 11 – June 15, 2014. This is between Mother's Day and Father's Day.

The 2014 legislative priorities for the NCSTHL include: 1) Recurring funds of at least \$7 million for the Home and Community Care Block Grant; 2) Maintain funding for senior centers; 3) Restore funding to sustain Project C.A.R.E.; 4) Ratio of Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) to residents in Nursing Homes; 5) Strengthen and fund North Carolina's Adult Protective Services Program.

The STHL promotes citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the General Assembly and assesses the legislative needs of older adults by convening a forum modeled after the North Carolina General Assembly. It is during these forums that the STHL establish priorities for the upcoming years. One delegate and one alternate represent every older adult in the state's 100-counties. Please feel free to contact your local representative. Also visit the STHL website at <http://www.ncsthl.org/> or like us on Facebook, search for North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature. The next STHL meeting will be June 12 – 13, 2014.