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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA COMMEMORATES WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY (WEAAD) THIS JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> 2016

Local effort to raise awareness about elder abuse and neglect in the District

Washington, DC, [ST], June 8, 2016– The DC Office on Aging's Elder Abuse Prevention Committee (EAPC) in conjunction with the District's Collaborative Training & Response for Older Victims (DC TROV) is commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2016. "WEAAD serves as a call-to-action for individuals, organizations, and communities to raise awareness about abuse, neglect, and exploitation of elders" according to EAPC coordinator Michael Kirkwood of the DC Office on Aging.

Unfortunately, elder abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation is a hidden problem in the District. "DC TROV studies have found that, of the 70,000 seniors living in Washington, D.C., 7,000 may be experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation during 2016 alone," according to Network for Victim Recovery of DC's Co-Executive Director Bridgette Harwood.

Older victims seeking help are encouraged to contact the DC Victim Hotline, which is available 24/7 by telephone, text, or online chat at 1-844-4HELPDC (1-844-443-5732) or [www.DCvictim.org/Chat](http://www.DCvictim.org/Chat). According to Michelle Garcia, Director of the Mayor's Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants, "The hotline represents an unprecedented collaboration of service providers in DC who are working to seamlessly connect victims of crime to free resources and to help them navigate the physical, financial, legal, and traumatic effects of crime."

Neighbors, tellers, and other professionals and community members who suspect elder abuse, neglect or exploitation are encouraged to report it to DC Adult Protective Services, which is available 24/7 at 202-541-3950. APS investigates reports of alleged cases of abuse, neglect, and exploitation by third parties, and self-neglect of vulnerable adults 18 years of age or older.

The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations (UN) first launched World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) on June 15, 2006 in an effort to unite communities around the world in raising awareness about elder abuse. WEAAD is in support of the UN's International Plan of Action acknowledging the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue.

DC's WEAAD commemoration can be followed on social media using the hashtag #WEAADDC and the national hashtag #WEAAD2016. The member organizations will be distributing information packets, and purple ribbons to seniors, and professionals. Members include:

- Adult Protective Services
- Network for Victim Recovery of DC
- Metropolitan Police Department
- Legal Counsel for the Elderly at AARP
- US Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia
- DC Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- DC Office on Aging
- Domestic Violence Unit of the Superior Court
- Long Term Care Ombudsmen at LCE/AARP
- District of Columbia Forensic Nurse Examiners (DCFNE)
- Office of the Attorney General (OAG)
- ElderSAFE Shelter
- DC Victim Hotline
- Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB)

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