

Attorney General: Celebrate Assisted Living Week, Grandparents Day



By Greg Abbott
Attorney General of Texas

The week of September 7-13, 2003 is National Assisted Living Week. This year's theme is "Sharing Life's Treasures."

The first day of National Assisted Living Week, September 7, is Grandparents Day, established in 1978 through a Presidential proclamation. The purpose of this day is to honor grandparents and help make children aware of the strength, information and guidance older people can offer. The National Grandparents Day Council is sponsoring a "Grandparents of the Year" Contest in which participants are nominated by their grandchildren.

National Assisted Living Week provides an opportunity for residents, family, staff, volunteers and the community to come together and celebrate seniors and the services provided within the assisted living community. The National Center for Assisted Living in Washington, D.C., recommends community activities such as family game night, art and craft shows, resident talent shows and poetry or short story readings. Most important of all is to spend time with the seniors in our lives.

It is equally important that we thank and acknowledge the tens of thousands of assisted living facilities that care for our seniors. These facilities are a valuable part of society. They furnish food,

shelter residents and provide personal care services, such as assistance with meals, dressing, and medication to dependent residents. Assisted living services are driven by an emphasis on personal dignity, autonomy, independence and self-determination.

The majority of assisted living facilities provide excellent residential care. Unfortunately, however, our office does encounter cases of abuse and neglect in assisted living facilities. This kind of abuse is deplorable for many reasons, but primarily because the abusers are in a position of trust and because the victims are usually so vulnerable. Protecting seniors is a cornerstone of my administration, and I will not tolerate facilities that ignore the law and threaten the health and safety of our seniors.

Our Elder Law & Public Health Division vigorously prosecutes assisted living facilities that break the law. During this past fiscal year that ended August 31, the division took six cases to trial, all resulting in judgments in favor of the State.

Ensuring that assisted living facilities comply with Texas law requires a concerted effort among state and local authorities. The Texas Department of Human Services conducts complaint investigations and surveys of assisted living facilities and refers cases to the Attorney General for civil enforcement. In addition, my office may defer to local prosecutors for enforcement, and several district and county attorneys have joined the battle to protect seniors in these facilities.

I hope on Grandparents Day and during National Assisted Living Week, you will join me in turning your thoughts to those Texans who are our parents and grandparents. They cared for us and helped build this great state. It is now our turn to care for them.

POINTS TO REMEMBER

SENIOR TEXANS

To report abuse in a long-term care facility, assisted living facility, or receiving home health care, contact:

Texas Department of Human Services
Long-term Care Regulatory Hotline
(800) 458-9858

To report elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation outside a facility contact:

Texas Department of Protective and
Regulatory Services
Adult Protective Services Abuse Hotline
(800) 252-5400

You can reach your local
Area Agency on Aging
by calling (800) 252-9240

Legal Hotline for Older Texans:
(800) 622-2520.

National Assisted Living Week
September 7-13, 2003

Grandparents Day
September 7, 2003
www.grandparents-day.com



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
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