

## The Vulnerable Adults Act

The Minnesota Vulnerable Adults Act is intended to protect adults with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. The Act requires the reporting of suspected maltreatment of vulnerable adults, requires investigation of the reports, and provides protective and counseling services in appropriate cases.

When a report of suspected maltreatment is made under the Act, the vulnerable adult has a right to be notified of any determinations of whether maltreatment occurred and to receive a written report of the final determination. If the vulnerable adult disagrees with the determination, the vulnerable adult has a right to request the investigating agency to reconsider the final determination, or to appeal the determination to a statewide Vulnerable Adult Maltreatment Review Panel.

## Reporting Abuse

Vulnerable adults may have difficulty reporting these crimes to law enforcement due to a variety of factors, including a lack of awareness that a crime has occurred, limited communication abilities, social isolation, dependence on the perpetrator, or fear of retaliation. This makes it especially important for members of the public to provide “tips” to stop harm to vulnerable adults.

Previously in Minnesota there were 150 county-based systems for reporting crimes against vulnerable adults. In 2015, however, the Minnesota Legislature created a statewide hotline for people to report mistreatment of vulnerable adults. The hotline is called the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center (MAARC). MAARC is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can be reached as follows:

## Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center

**(844) 880-1574**

[dhs.adultprotection@state.mn.us](mailto:dhs.adultprotection@state.mn.us)

The MAARC is responsible for:

- Immediately notifying county social services if a vulnerable adult needs immediate adult protective services.
- Immediately notifying law enforcement of any report of suspected maltreatment in which there is reason to believe a crime has been committed.
- Referring reports of suspected maltreatment to the lead investigative agency for responding to the report, which may include county and adult protection or reports to state agencies such as the Minnesota Department of Health or the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

## Who is a Mandated Reporter

- Hopefully, all people who witness or suspect maltreatment will report the abuse. However, mandated reporters are a special group required to report suspected maltreatment.
- Mandated reporters are professionals or professional's delegate identified by law who **MUST** make a report if they have reason to believe that the abuse, neglect, or financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult has occurred. "Mandated reporter" means a professional or professional's delegate while engaged in:
  - Social services
  - Law enforcement

Office Hours:  
Monday – Friday 8a-4:30p

updated 11/2023  
1750 Energy Drive  
Mankato, MN 56001

- Education
- Direct care
- Licensed health and human services professionals (MS 214.01, subdivision 2)
- Employment in a licensed facility
- Medical examiner or coroner activities

## Licensed Facilities

In addition, hospitals, nursing homes, assisted living facilities and home health agencies are regulated and licensed by the Minnesota Department of Health. If MDH receives a complaint regarding the medical care or treatment of a patient, it has the authority to conduct an investigation of the incident. The Office of Health Facility Complaints (OHFC) is the division within the MDH charged with conducting the investigations. You may contact the OHFC at:

**Minnesota Department of Health**  
Office of Health Facility Complaints  
300 Golden Rule Building  
P.O. Box 64970  
St. Paul, MN 55164-0970  
(651) 201-4201 or (800) 369-7994  
[health.ohfc-complaints@state.mn.us](mailto:health.ohfc-complaints@state.mn.us)

## Conclusion

Vulnerable adults are not always able to advocate for themselves. It is important for people who see abuse to report it. The Vulnerable Adults Act provides immunity from civil or criminal liability to anyone who makes a good faith report of abuse. Good Samaritans can make all the difference.