

## Telemarketing Fraud

It can be challenging to tell if a telemarketing call is legitimate. This is especially true if you are pressured to make an instant decision; for example, to send money right away to claim a prize that has been won. Scams can range from prize offers to travel packages to phony charities.

Be wary of telemarketing sales pitches such as these or other scams:

- ▶ “You have won a lottery, but to claim the money, you must send a payment to pay the taxes on the money you have won.”
- ▶ “We can give you a great home loan at a great price, regardless of your credit.”
- ▶ “We are offering you a fantastic buy on your favorite magazines; this is the last day and we must receive your money by midnight to guarantee this offer.”
- ▶ “You have a tax refund; verify your personal information to claim the money.”
- ▶ Grandparent scam: person poses as grandchild without stating their name and asks for money right away to get out of jail, buy a plane ticket home, etc.
- ▶ Bank is calling to verify your personal information for security purposes.
- ▶ Letter stating you won a trip, money, car, or “just call this number.”

## How to Protect Yourself from Financial Elder Abuse

- ▶ Don’t sign blank checks allowing another person to fill in the amount.
- ▶ Don’t give strangers access to your bank accounts.
- ▶ Check your financial statements frequently and carefully for unauthorized withdrawals.
- ▶ Don’t be pressured by family members, friends, caregivers, or anyone to do anything you don’t want to do.
- ▶ Don’t leave money or valuables in plain view.
- ▶ Be aware of scams (either by phone, email or regular mail). If it sounds too good to be true; it probably is.
- ▶ NEVER give out your personal information to anyone on a telephone or email pitch, hang up the phone and call a family member/friend to help determine the validity of the calls.

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If you suspect a person who is elderly or disabled is being financially exploited, contact us at

### Division of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse

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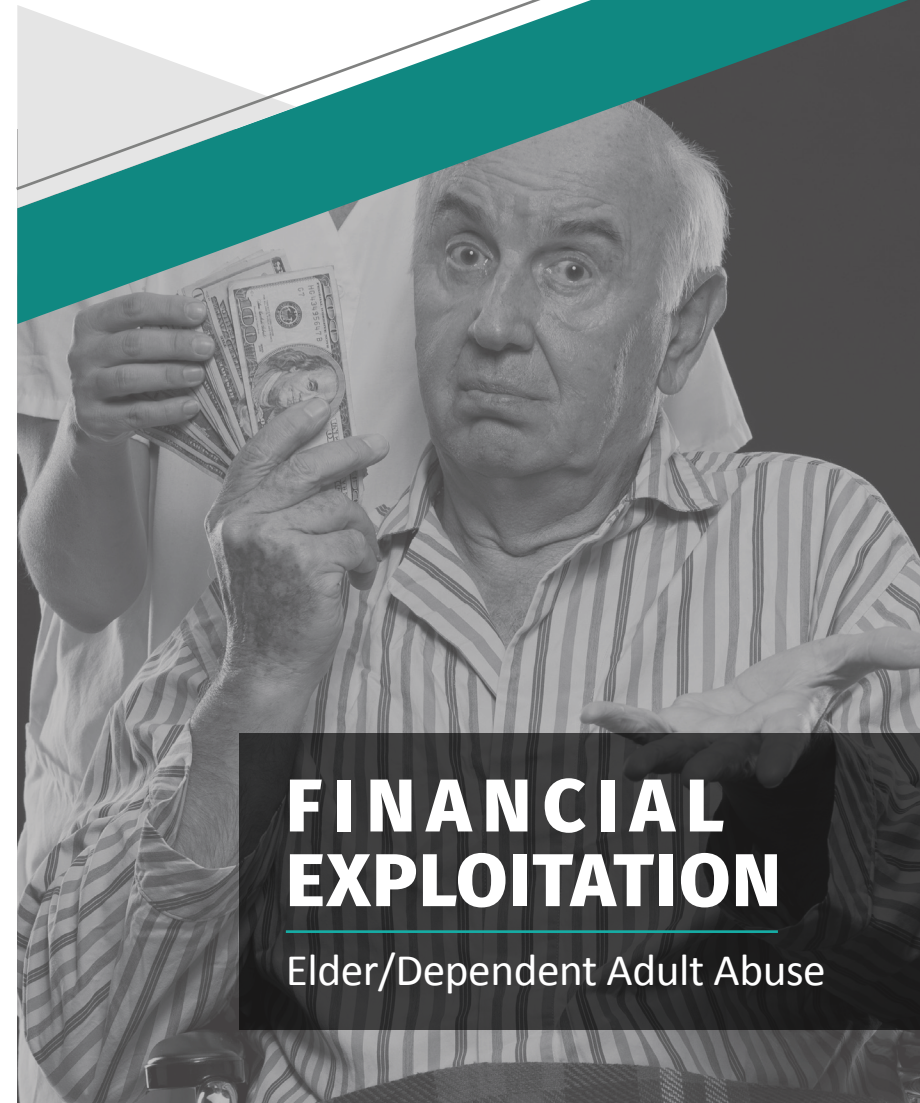
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DMFEA WEBSITE



# FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

## Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse

## What is Financial Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse?

Financial elder/dependent adult abuse is any theft or embezzlement of money or any other property from an elder. Taking money from a wallet, manipulating an elder to turn over money or using an elder's debit card to make purchases for oneself can all be considered financial abuse. This is a serious form of abuse as it can leave elders unable to provide for their needs and fearful of what tomorrow will hold. Some examples of financial elder abuse are:

- ▶ Stealing money, jewelry, or personal possessions.
- ▶ Intercepting cash or checks.
- ▶ Fraudulently convincing an elder to hand over money and/or personal belongings.
- ▶ Telemarketing fraud.
- ▶ Identity theft.
- ▶ Predatory lending and home sale scams.
- ▶ Home improvement scams.
- ▶ Not paying for share of the cost of nursing homes.
- ▶ Befriending an elder for elaborate gifts (cars, trips, loans, etc.).
- ▶ Power-of-Attorney fraud.
- ▶ Caretaker stating they are having a rough time financially in an effort to coerce financial gifts.

## RECOGNIZING

### The Warning Signs

### Signs and Symptoms of Financial Abuse:

- ▶ Significant withdrawals from the elder's accounts.
- ▶ Sudden changes in the elder's financial condition.
- ▶ Items or cash missing from the elder's household.
- ▶ Adding additional names on a bank signature card.
- ▶ Unpaid bills despite having enough money.
- ▶ Providing unnecessary services or subscriptions.
- ▶ Unapproved withdrawals of funds using an ATM card.
- ▶ Unexplained sudden transfer of assets.
- ▶ Elder signs over their will to a neighbor or friend.
- ▶ Appearance of a stranger who begins a new close relationship and offers to manage the elder's finances and assets.
- ▶ Elder is isolated or lonely with no visitors or relatives. Family members or care-giver isolate the individual, restricting the elder's contact with others.

## Examples of Financial Abuse include

Cashing checks without authorization/permission.

- ▶ Forging an elder's signature.
- ▶ Misusing or stealing an elder's money or possessions.
- ▶ Coercing or deceiving an elder into signing documents such as a contract or will.
- ▶ Improper use of conservatorship, guardianship, or power-of-attorney.

### Who might be an abuser:

- ▶ Family members – may commit financial abuse out of a sense of entitlement.
- ▶ Caretakers – may persuade a client to give them money, or steal valuables from the client's home or room.
- ▶ Neighbors – sometimes have the opportunity to steal from the elderly, particularly if they frequently perform chores for them, and like family care-takers, feel entitled to compensation.
- ▶ Professionals – lawyers, bankers, financial advisors and others find ways to cheat the elderly by engaging in deceptive billing practices or by embezzling funds.