

NEW—Sexual Assault Response Unit

DPPC created the Sexual Assault Response Unit (SAR) utilizing the principles of trauma informed care. SAR has four components: Peer Support Services that provide support to survivors and outreach to systems within their community; Navigation services that provide psychoeducation and personal/systems advocacy; a clinical matching service that builds clinical treatments options and matches survivors for therapy with clinicians with expertise in trauma and disabilities; and an Advisory Council comprised of key stakeholders. and leaders to advance SAR's state-wide efforts.

Mandated Reporter Protection

Mandated Reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report. Non-mandated reporters are also protected providing the report was made in "good faith."

In addition, the DPPC will conduct investigations into allegations that people have been retaliated against for providing information to the DPPC.

Failure To Report

Failure to report incidences of suspected abuse and neglect can result in severe consequences for the alleged victim, other potential victims and the Mandated Reporter. In Massachusetts, Mandated Reporters who fail to file a report are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000.

To File A Report Call:

24-HR. HOTLINE: 1-800-426-9009

Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers, please use Video Relay Services (VRS) or MARElay (711) to contact DPPC hotline.

For DPPC Training Contact:

Disabled Persons Protection Commission

300 Granite Street, Suite 404, Braintree, MA 02184

Phone: (617) 727-6465

Fax: (617) 727-6469

Web: <http://www.mass.gov/dppc/>

What makes reporting abuse difficult?

Professionals may be:

- Shocked, angered or embarrassed by information
- Hearing information that is very contrary to their own personal standards
- Unclear of their responsibility to report or what constitutes abuse or neglect
- Reluctant to become involved
- Fearful that reporting will make the situation worse
- Reluctant to break the "Code of Silence" among employees
- Fearful of being brought into a legal matter, where their reputation and character may be questioned
- Fearful of retaliation from the alleged abuser or agency
- Fearful of alienating the caretaker/abuser and having needed services refused
- Reluctant, when the alleged abuser is a colleague

Victims may be:

- Unable to explain what happened because of the nature of their disability
- Uncomfortable sharing very private, personal information
- Having intense feelings of fear, shame, and guilt
- Dependent on the abuser/perpetrator for assistance
- Fearful of rejection
- Fearful of being blamed for the incident
- Fearful of threats of further harm to self or others
- Fearful of getting the abuser/perpetrator in trouble
- Fearful of being left without a home or family
- Fearful of violating the abuser/perpetrator's orders



Abuse Reporting Hotline Numbers

Department of Children & Families (DCF)

Phone: 1-800-792-5200 *Ages birth to 17*

Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)

Phone: 1-800-426-9009 *Ages 18 to 59*

Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA)

Phone: 1-800-922-2275 *Ages 60 & above*

Department of Public Health (DPH)

Phone: 1-800-462-5540 *Patients in Long Term Care Facilities*



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Reporting



Abuse & Neglect Of Persons With Disabilities

1-800-426-9009

Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers,
please use Video Relay Services (VRS)
or MARElay (711) to contact
DPPC hotline.

Maura T. Healey	Governor
Kimberley Discoll	Lt. Governor
James T. Brett	Chairperson
Kacy C. Maitland	Commissioner
Mary Beth McMahon	Commissioner
Nancy A. Alterio	Executive Director

DPPC does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity in the provision of services.

What Is the D.P.P.C.?

The Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is an independent state agency created by legislation in 1987. Massachusetts General Law chapter 19C (**M.G.L. c. 19C**) established the DPPC to *protect adults with mental and physical disabilities, between the ages of 18 and 59, from abuse or neglect by their caregiver(s)* whether in a private, family or state care setting.

The DPPC enabling statute fills the gap between the child abuse (through the age of 17) and elder abuse (age 60 and over) statutes.

Mission Statement

The mission of the DPPC is *"To protect adults with disabilities from the abusive acts or omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness and prevention."*

Role of the D.P.P.C.

In cases of suspected physical, emotional and sexual abuse or neglect of a person with mental or physical disabilities, the DPPC:

- Receives and screens reports of suspected abuse and neglect through a 24-Hr. Hotline,
- Receives and screens reports of all deaths, when an individual has died while in the care of a state or private service provider,
- Conducts investigations,
- Oversees investigations conducted by other state agencies (the Department of Developmental Services, Department of Mental Health, and Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission) on the DPPC's behalf,
- Ensures that appropriate protective services are provided when abuse is substantiated,
- Provides training and education for service providers, law enforcement personnel and others, and
- Provides assistance to callers in clarifying the presence of abuse or neglect.

What Is A Mandated Reporter?

Mandated Reporters are persons who, as a result of their profession, are more likely to be aware of abuse of persons with disabilities. Mandated Reporters are required, by law, to report cases of suspected abuse to the DPPC when they have a suspicion that a person with a disability is suffering from a reportable condition of abuse or neglect.

In Massachusetts, mandated reporting is an individual responsibility. It is up to the individual reporter to be certain that a report of suspected abuse or neglect is filed. ***Mandated Reporters should not rely on others, such as supervisors or administrators, to file reports for them.***

All allegations of abuse or neglect should be reported immediately and appropriately, regardless of the personal feelings of knowledgeable staff.

Who Are Mandated Reporters?

- | | |
|--|--|
| * Medical personnel | * Medical examiners |
| * Social workers | * Foster parents |
| * Police officers | * Probation officers |
| * Educational administrators | * Dentists |
| * Guidance counselors | * Family counselors |
| * Daycare workers | * Psychologists |
| * Public and private school teachers | |
| * Employees of private agencies providing services to people with disabilities | * Employees of state agencies in the Executive Office of Health & Human Services |

What Is Reportable?

The standard for reporting suspected abuse or neglect in Massachusetts is any situation where there is a ***reasonable suspicion*** to believe that abuse or neglect exists. Neglect may include patient on patient abuse.

"If you suspect abuse or neglect, trust your feelings and report to the DPPC."

What To Do When An Individual Reports Abuse Or Neglect

- Be calm and supportive
- Never agree to keep the information secret
- Seek privacy so the individual is protected from disclosing in public
- Assure the individual that she/he did the right thing by telling you about the allegation
- Never blame the victim
- Do not investigate
- Immediately report the suspected abuse or neglect
- Maintain confidentiality

How To File A DPPC Report

When you suspect that abuse or neglect of a person with a disability has occurred, call the DPPC 24-Hour Hotline at:

1-800-426-9009

Deaf and Hard of Hearing callers, please use Video Relay Services (VRS) or MARElay (711) to contact DPPC hotline.

The State Police Detective Unit



During fiscal year 1998, a State Police Detective Unit (SPDU) was established within the Commission. The SPDU is comprised of a Sergeant and four troopers. The SPDU is physically located within the offices of the DPPC. The troopers of the SPDU review 100% of all complaints received by the Commission to determine which of these complaints constitute criminal activity against a person with a disability. When there is an appearance of criminal activity, the report is referred to the appropriate District Attorney's office.

Contacting The Police

Abuse or neglect committed against a person with a disability might also be a crime. Call your local police immediately if you think a crime, such as an assault & battery, sexual assault, rape or larceny has been committed. In an emergency, contact your local police department by **dialing 911**.