



## **New York State Targets Elder Abuse**

### **Brief Summary of Two Statewide Summits & the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse**

#### First Statewide Elder Abuse Summit

- **In 2001, Art Mason**, Lifespan’s Elder Abuse Prevention Program Director, was invited to participate in the **National Policy Summit on Elder Abuse, held in Washington, DC**. This, in turn, prompted Lifespan to begin looking into the possibility of convening an Elder Abuse Summit in New York State.
- **In 2004**, Lifespan of Greater Rochester took on the challenge of securing funding and convening the **first comprehensive, statewide Elder Abuse Summit in the nation**. The Summit, held in Albany, brought together experts from across the state to develop recommendations to address the growing problem of elder mistreatment.

#### Creation of New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse

- **New York State Coalition on Elder Abuse – 15 years of collaboration throughout New York State**. As a natural follow-up to the Summit, Lifespan, in consultation with the steering committee, immediately organized a statewide Coalition on Elder Abuse to help implement the Action Agenda developed by the Summit participants. The Coalition is a multidisciplinary, statewide network of individuals, private organizations and public agencies working together to protect elders from abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.

#### Second Statewide Elder Abuse Summit

- **Although there had been great progress made** in all regions of New York State following the Summit and creation of the statewide Coalition in 2004, finding ways to improve recognition, intervention, prevention and prosecution to better protect the growing aging population **continued to be a challenge throughout the state**.
- **In 2010**, it was time to bring major stakeholders together again to review and reprioritize the NYS Elder Abuse Action Agenda. The 2004 recommendations, our collective experience over the past six years, and the findings of the statewide Elder Abuse Prevalence Study formed the starting point for the *next steps* discussion. Lifespan secured federal funding to convene a **second New York State Elder Abuse Summit**, held in Albany in Nov 2010.

## 2004 and 2010 Statewide Elder Abuse Summits

- **Approximately 100 experts or major stakeholders in the field of elder abuse were invited to attend the three-day Summits in 2004 and 2010.** The goal for both Summits was to involve a cross-section of public and private agencies, representing all regions of the state. Participants represented academia, financial institutions, health care, law enforcement, the legal community, local government, not-for-profit agencies, and state government to explore innovative approaches to elder mistreatment. Both Summits also had equally diverse planning teams.
- Based on individual expertise and the desire to have representation from a variety of disciplines in each group, participants were **pre-assigned to one of six work groups.**
  - **In 2004**
    - Financial Exploitation;
    - Intervention Models;
    - Prosecution and Law Enforcement;
    - Public Awareness and Education;
    - Public Health; and
    - Self-Neglect.
  - **In 2010**
    - Assessment, Data Collection and Evaluation;
    - Financial Exploitation;
    - Health, Mental Health and Substance Abuse;
    - Laws, Law Enforcement and Prosecution;
    - Multidisciplinary Teams and Cross-System Collaboration; and
    - Public/Professional Awareness, Education and Training.
- Each group was asked to develop **three recommendations** for presentation during the final plenary session. Participants were also asked to consider crosscutting areas as they developed their recommendations.
  - **In 2004**
    - Funding and Resources;
    - Policy and Legislation;
    - Prevention;
    - Program Development;
    - Research and Data.
  - **In 2010** – keeping in mind the following themes:
    - What will make a difference;
    - Statewide applicability;
    - Addressing a critical need or problem;
    - Specific benefits to be achieved; and
    - Ambitious, but doable.
- For both Summits, Lifespan retained an experienced facilitator as a consultant to set up the work group process, and to train and lead the facilitation/recorder teams. **Participants also received training the night before to explain the very rigorous, structured work group process.**

# New York State Elder Abuse Action Agenda

## Highlights of Progress or Activities related to a sample of the 2004 and 2010 Summit Recommendations

A number of significant achievements throughout New York State are **directly or indirectly related to the 2004 and 2010 Summit recommendations, the work of the statewide Coalition, and local collaborative initiatives by Coalition members throughout the state**. Below you will find a **small sample of these achievements** – although, there is still much work to be done to better protect vulnerable older adults in our communities.

### Reform & Update Legislation:

**Power of Attorney reform** was identified as a priority recommendation during the 2004 Summit and has been a focus of the Coalition and its members ever since. First working with the NYS Law Revision Commission for **final passage of the law**, and then **continuing to provide education and public awareness** throughout the state about the changes and how they can be used to benefit vulnerable older adults. There are **also continued efforts to address many of the other legislative issues** that were identified by Summit participants.

### Conduct a Statewide Research Study:

***Under the Radar: New York State Elder Abuse Prevalence Study***. Partnering with Weill Cornell Medical College and New York City Department for the Aging, Lifespan received funding from the NYS Office of Children & Family Services, Hoyt Memorial Children and Family Trust Fund and became the lead agency for this **statewide team effort**. At least three additional studies have been based on the original findings.

### Statewide Resource Center/Network:

The **NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse** serves as a catalyst for change, raising awareness about elder mistreatment and offering solutions for prevention and intervention through education and research. Since 2004, the Coalition has been actively involved in statewide outreach efforts, encouraging local, multidisciplinary elder abuse coalitions and public awareness efforts. In 2012, the **Coalition website was launched** to serve as a central resource for local, state and national information, highlighting:

- Trainings, conferences, webinars, other events for both professionals and the general public;
- Collaborative initiatives and special events;
- News articles, publications, training materials, best practices;
- Changes in state & federal law and proposed legislation to protect older adult victims;
- Manuals, reports, research, videos; and
- Other relevant information.

## Professional Training & Public Awareness Initiatives:

Since 2004, there has been a **considerable increase in professional training & public awareness opportunities offered by many different local organizations throughout the state** – most of these sponsoring groups are members of the statewide Coalition; and the original NYS Enhanced Multidisciplinary Team Project in seven Finger Lakes counties and in Manhattan had a **training component specifically for financial institutions**. In addition, with support from New York State Office for the Aging, Lifespan began offering a series of 5 to 8 hour **regional training programs on Elder Abuse, Financial Exploitation, and DV in Later Life** for professionals across the state who have not had easy access to such programs in the past. Each year there is an **increase in local community activities** to recognize World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and **continue raising public awareness** all year long. All these early initiatives are continuing and expanding in rural and urban areas throughout the state.

## Multidisciplinary Teams & Cross-System Collaboration:

Following the 2004 Summit and formation of the statewide Coalition there was **renewed interest in forming new, local collaborative efforts and energizing existing ones**, including but not limited to:

- New York City Elder Abuse Network
- Monroe Co. Elder Fatality Review Team
- Finger Lakes Elder Abuse Coalition
- Lifespan's Elder Abuse Consortium
- Erie Co. Council on Elder Abuse
- Oneida Co. Elder Abuse Coalition MDT
- Ulster Co. Elder Abuse Coalition
- Broome Co. Family Violence Prevention Council
- Syracuse Area Domestic & Sexual Violence Coalition
- Coalition on Elder Abuse in Dutchess Co.
- Schenectady Stand Up Guys Elder Abuse Subcommittee
- Finger Lakes ID Theft Coalition
- New York City Elder Fatality Review Team
- New York City Elder Abuse Center
- Westchester Elder Abuse Coalition
- Clinton Co. Financial Exploitation Task Force
- Greene & Columbia Counties Task Force on Elder Abuse

In 2012, NYS Office for the Aging secured a federal grant to create **Enhanced Multidisciplinary Teams (E-MDTs)** in the **Finger Lakes area** (7 teams in 7 different counties coordinated by Lifespan) and **Manhattan** (coordinated by New York City Elder Abuse Center). The unique feature of these teams is access to a forensic accountant and geriatric mental health specialist. The initiative was then continued with funding from **NYS Office for the Aging and NYS Office of Victim Services/Victims of Crime Act**, allowing for gradual expansion into additional counties with the goal of serving every county in the state by **fall 2020**. **Statewide expansion also allowed Lifespan to offer** a series of monthly professional webinars; and for those areas without teams yet, one-on-one case consultation with experienced Lifespan staff, providing problem solving and recommendations, with possible linkage to a forensic accountant – a valuable investigative service that is not usually available in many areas of New York State.

Several areas in New York State have also received **OVW Domestic Violence in Later Life Law Enforcement Training grants**, which facilitate cross-system collaboration in local communities – Monroe County, Onondaga County, Westchester County, and Brooklyn.

**For more information** on the 2004 and 2010 NYS Elder Abuse Summits, and the ongoing work of the NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse and its members, please contact Denise Shukoff, Coordinator of the Coalition, [dshukoff@lifespan-roch.org](mailto:dshukoff@lifespan-roch.org). NYS Coalition on Elder Abuse website: [www.nyselderabuse.org](http://www.nyselderabuse.org).