

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 2458
Enacting the KanCare/Medicaid Ombudsman Act**

**Presented to the Senate Committee on Judiciary
By: Susan Fout Commissioner of Behavioral Health Services
Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services**

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The National Council on Aging (NCOA) reports that approximately 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 or older have experienced some form of elder abuse. Some estimates range as high as 5 million elders being abused each year; another study shows that only 1 in 14 cases of abuse are reported. Elders who are abused have a 300 percent higher risk of death when compared to those who have not been mistreated.

Elder abuse can take many forms, such as physical, sexual, verbal, financial, and emotional abuse, in addition to neglect, mistreatment, or confinement (NCOA, 2017).

The Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) currently works to address elder abuse with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) via the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (ANE) Unit established by the Attorney General's office (K.S.A. 75-723). In addition to the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services investigating reports of adult abuse, neglect, and exploitation in adult care homes, such as nursing home facilities, assisted living facilities, and boarding care (ANE Unit Fiscal Report, SFY 2016), the current contract between the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services has mandated assessors employed at a Kansas Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) report any abuse, neglect, or exploitation they might encounter out in the field when meeting with customers (K.S.A. 38-2223(a)).

Funds from the federally funded Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (PEANE) Grant enable the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) and the other agencies working with the Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (ANE) Unit to disseminate critical information to caregivers, friends, and family members on how to recognize and report these heinous acts that are committed against our elderly population in Kansas.

In SFY 2018, funds from the Prevention of Elder Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (PEANE) Grant enabled the Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS) Secretary, Tim Keck, to record radio public service announcements that will be provided to the Kansas Association of Broadcasters for release on the airways with the intent of increasing statewide awareness of this issue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.