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### **Commonwealth's Attorney Launches "Make it Your Business" Elder Abuse Campaign**

Commonwealth's Attorney Colin D. Stolle announces the launch of his office's "*Make it Your Business*" elder abuse campaign. The campaign focuses on encouraging elder abuse victims and those who suspect someone is a victim of elder abuse to reach out for help. A [Public Service Announcement](#) illustrates this point by comparing child abuse to elder abuse. The announcement tells viewers that all abuse is their business and urges witnesses to report abuse.

According to the National Council on Aging (NCOA), elder abuse can be physical, emotional, or sexual. It includes exploitation (misuse of or withholding resources), neglect (failure to provide basic needs or medical attention), and abandonment. It's estimated that one (1) in ten (10) adults ages sixty (60) and older have experienced some form of elder abuse, yet only one (1) in fourteen (14) cases are thought to be reported to authorities.

"The elderly are among our most vulnerable and powerless victims," Stolle said. "Most people wouldn't think twice about reporting suspected child abuse. Elder abuse should be treated the same way. Don't be afraid to get involved, because you could be saving someone's life."

Signs of elder abuse may include bruises, marks, broken bones, bed sores, abrasion, burns, sudden changes in finances, poor hygiene, unexplained weight loss, sleeplessness, unusual depression, unsafe or unclean living conditions, lacking medical aids, and withdrawal from regular activities. The perpetrator is often a family member or caregiver. The elderly are more susceptible to victimization when they are isolated or suffer from memory loss or communication challenges.

Anyone who suspects or witnesses abuse should call the Virginia Beach Police Department's Detective Bureau at (757) 385-4101. If the victim is in immediate danger, call 911. Elder abuse is a violation of Virginia Law. Abuse or neglect of an incapacitated adult that results in serious bodily injury or disease is a class four (4) felony punishable by up to ten (10) years. Abuse or