



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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(in advance of June 14 and 15 observances)

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IL Dept on Aging observes Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day (June 14) and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (June 15)

These observances serve as a reminder to end elder abuse

SPRINGFIELD – In observance of Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day and Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) encourages residents to recognize the serious yet often overlooked issue of elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This year marks the first Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day in Illinois on June 14 and the 10th anniversary of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.

“Here in Illinois there are more than two million older adults ages 60 and older,” said Illinois Department on Aging Director John K. Holton, Ph.D. “In honor of Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day and World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, let us respect our elders and protect the most vulnerable by learning more about elder rights and abuse prevention.”

Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner proclaimed June 14, 2015 as *Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day* (proclamation follows this release). The day recognizes grandparent rights and the negative effects of being alienated from a child’s life. The national non-profit organization, GRAND USA (Grandparent Rights Advocates National Delegation), will be hosting a webinar on June 14 on grandparent rights and promoting healthy family relationships.

“GRAND USA feels that Illinois children deserve strong family bonds. Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day will focus attention on the plight of thousands of grandchildren and grandparents who are denied loving relationships for a variety of reasons,” said Lilly Black, Founder of Grand USA.

June 15 marks the observance of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. This day highlights the need to end physical, emotional, and financial abuse of elders. Around the world, supporters honor the day by wearing purple to show solidarity in ending elder abuse and neglect.

“Last year, there were more than 14,000 reports of elder abuse in Illinois. While that may seem high, it shows an increase in awareness,” said Director Holton. “Everyday seniors are abused and exploited; sometimes by those they trust the most. I encourage everyone to support World Elder Abuse Awareness Day by wearing the color purple to show you want an end to elder abuse.”

The Adult Protective Services Program within IDoA responds to reports of mistreatment and exploitation against older adults in the community. The program is coordinated through providers trained to assist and/or intervene. If you or someone you know is a victim, call local law enforcement or the Departments' 24-hour Adult Protective Services Hotline at 866-800-1409.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was launched on June 15, 2006, by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA): http://ncea.aoa.gov/Get_Involved/Awareness/WEAAD/index.aspx

To sign up for the GRAND USA webinar, log on to <http://www.grandparentsacademy.com/webinar>. For more information about GRAND USA visit their website at <http://www.grand-usa.org>

For more information about programs and services to assist older adults in Illinois, their families and caregivers, log on to the department website at: <http://www.illinois.gov/aging/> or call the Department on Aging at 1-800-252-8966 or (TTY, hearing impaired use) call 1-888-206-1327.

The text of the Governor's proclamation follows:

WHEREAS, strong family relationships constitute the foundation of our community; and,

WHEREAS, alienation behaviors are frequently present in high-conflict divorces, separations, asymmetrical custody arrangements, and in intact marriages, often causing mental and emotional anguish to children; and

WHEREAS, alienation is a term used to describe any number of behaviors and attitudes on the part of one or both parents designed to interfere, damage or destroy the relationship between a child and family member; and,

WHEREAS, alienation takes advantage of the innocent and impressionable, as well as the suggestibility and dependency of a child depriving children of their right to love and be loved by their extended family; and,

WHEREAS mental health professionals agree that the negative effects of alienation can follow a child into adulthood with tragic consequences; and,

WHEREAS the recently published Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) made several references to the dysfunctional family dynamic of alienation to be a form of psychological child abuse; and,

WHEREAS Grandparent Alienation Awareness Day is intended to increase the knowledge and understanding of this problem to help families, institutions, the legal and mental health community, and leaders to better identify and combat such abusive behavior to children;

THEREFORE, I, Bruce Rauner, Governor of the State of Illinois, do hereby proclaim June 14, 2015 as **GRANDPARENT ALIENATION AWARENESS DAY** in Illinois.

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