

Elder Abuse

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... Make sure that you know what the definition of an “elder” (or similar word or term) is so that if you are a mandated reporter of “elder abuse,” you know exactly where and how the line is drawn – and when you have to break confidentiality to make a report to adult protective services (or a similarly titled agency). One state’s definition is “any person residing in this state, 65 years of age or older.” So, what if your twenty-five year old patient (in such a state) tells you that when he was in another state, he was informed by his eighty-five year old grandfather that he, the grandfather, was being neglected in a nursing home. Are you required to report?

The grandfather does not reside in this state, so he is not considered an “elder” for purposes of this state’s elder abuse reporting law. A report by the therapist might in fact constitute a breach of confidentiality. If the patient wanted it to be reported, he likely could do so himself, rather than ask the therapist to do it for him. Of course, a therapist might have to report if the law in the state where he or she practices defines the term differently, perhaps more broadly.

So, be careful – know the precise definition of an “elder” or “dependent adult” (or similar categories of persons) so that you can make reports when required or authorized and so that you can maintain confidentiality when you are duty bound to do so.

Check out these two additional CPH & Associates' blogs for more information about about [Elder Abuse Reporting](#) and [Elder Abuse / Dependent Adult Abuse Reporting](#).

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