

# Public Health Communications Awards

## APPLICATION: MOST INNOVATIVE CAMPAIGN

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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| <b>Jurisdiction size (Please check one): Large (Population exceeds 700,000)</b> |  |

### ABOUT THE COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN

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| <b>Name Of Communications Campaign</b>             | See, Stop, Prevent Elder Abuse  |
| <b>Brief Campaign Overview (200 Words Or Less)</b> | <p>The goal is to raise awareness about the prevalence of elder and dependent adult abuse and foster a sense of shared responsibility to act if something appears wrong. Many people do not voice suspicions of abuse because they think it isn't their place even when something looks or sounds wrong. By raising awareness about the signs and symptoms of elder and dependent adult abuse, we can instill confidence in people to speak up and confidentially call the San Mateo County 24-hour phone line. Research shows that for every one reported case of older adult abuse – there are another 24 that go unreported. EDAPT's materials include the tagline: "It's better to call and be wrong than to be right and do nothing."</p> <p>The campaign seeks to shift the responsibility on to the person who suspects abuse. Neighbors, friends, family, business owners – we are all responsible for looking out for our more vulnerable population to prevent abuse and help older and</p> |

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|                            | dependent adults protect themselves. “It’s everyone’s business to protect the health and well-being of dependent and older adults. Take a stand and make the call — you could be saving someone’s life.” |
| <b>Campaign Start Date</b> | January 1, 2016  |
| <b>Campaign End Date</b>   | Ongoing  |

## CAMPAIGN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

**What is the purpose of this campaign? Does it address an underlying community need? Please describe why the campaign was developed. You are encouraged to submit evidence of need (e.g., local news stories, internal reports, testimonials, data, and community health assessments) as an addendum to this form.**

In late 2015, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors allocated funds to support of a new initiative, the Elder and Dependent Adult Protection Team (EDAPT), to raise awareness about how to prevent and protect dependent and older adults from abuse in San Mateo County. EDAPT focuses on preventing financial abuse, the most common form of older adult abuse in San Mateo County. It’s common for someone to experience more than one form of abuse. Research shows that for every one case of older adult abuse that is reported – there are another 24 that go unreported.

The County lacked a multi-disciplinary team that coordinated between the District Attorney’s Office, County Counsel, Aging and Adult Services, and law enforcement to raise awareness about this type of abuse and how to help others. There is no uniform definition of qualifies as elder abuse, and therefore can be hard to identify without knowing more about what symptoms and signs look like. Elder and dependent adult abuse can be financial, physical, emotional, or sexual, and can also include neglect or isolation – and it’s common for someone to experience more than one type. Signs and symptoms can appear as someone not being cared for, having unexplained bruises, being depressed or anxious, or having unusual bank account activity.

Reports of alleged fraud and abuse in San Mateo County are on the rise. In fiscal year 2014-2015, 26% of all cases opened up by Adult Protective Services (APS) involved alleged financial fraud (a total of 349). In the first quarter of 2015-2016, Adult Protective Services (APS) has opened 110 cases of alleged financial fraud, a significant uptick. In 2014-2015, 91% of all alleged financial fraud cases involved seniors, while 9% involved dependent adults. In addition to the 349 financial abuse cases opened by APS in 2014-15, 487 cases involved self-neglect and 217 involved neglect by others. APS staff estimates that over half of neglect and self-neglect cases involve an additional allegation of abuse, which may include financial abuse.

San Mateo County will have a greater proportion of older adults than the state average. According to the 2010 Census, the number of those ages 60 and over is 137,584, or 19% of the total population for SMC. By the year 2030, nearly one in four San Mateo County residents will be over the age of 65. San Mateo County’s older adult population is estimated to grow by over 70% by 2030 and the number of people over the age of 85 will increase to two and a half times the current number. By 2030, 1 out of 5

people over the age of 65 in San Mateo County will have a physical or mental disability, and some communities will face an even greater prevalence of these conditions.

Many older adults experience social isolation and have feelings of loneliness, often as a result of reduced interactions with family and friends and withdrawal from social contact. Social isolation makes older adults more susceptible to physical and financial abuse. There is more of a need than ever to engage the community on how to protect older and dependent adults and help ensure everyone is able to live and grow older safely in our county.

Unless we make significant changes in how the community looks out for our older population, the need for coordinated healthcare and an extensive array of robust community-based services far exceed what our public and private systems can provide. This campaign seeks to address this by preventing elder abuse and raising awareness today to support healthy aging for tomorrow.

**Does your campaign address an issue related to health equity? How?**

Older and dependent adults are at increased risk of abuse due to lack of mobility, complex and multiple chronic medical conditions, isolation, and dependence on others for care. Aging and Adult Services partnership with the Health Plan of San Mateo (HPSM) provides coordinated health, medical and home and community based services to its most vulnerable populations in San Mateo County, who also face a higher risk of being financially abused and neglect. However, people need to report abuse in order to receive these services.

HPSM sent a health risk assessment to CareAdvantage members that had been enrolled in the program from January 2006 through October 2011. CareAdvantage members have Medicare and Medi-Cal coverage, most being 65 years and over but there are a number of CareAdvantage members that are under 65 years and disabled. The HPSM survey data indicated that the majority of older adult members have chronic conditions (likely more than one), need to be encouraged to have pneumonia shots, and colorectal screenings and the health needs of those older adults losing weight unexpectedly should be addressed. These risk factors not only jeopardizes a person's health, but makes them more susceptible to various forms of maltreatment, as they are more prone to lack the capacity and ability to protect themselves. As EDAPT is geared to address abuse and neglect of elders and dependent adults there is also an effort to ensure that a person's health and well-being is safeguarded through targeted client-centered interventions.

**What population was this campaign targeted to reach? How did you plan to reach them?**

The older and dependent adult population is difficult to reach due to isolation, particularly if they are experiencing abuse. By raising awareness at the community level and conducting outreach in locations where older adults are more likely to frequent, we can help break down barriers between people who may be abused and those who can help. Specific communication strategies include coordinating outreach and events with health observances and other older adult campaigns, using multiple channels to raise awareness of symptoms and resources, use spokespeople from to promote prevention, leverage partnerships with Sheriff's Office, County Counsel, and senior partnerships to raise awareness and provide materials and messaging at targeted channels as an intervention. For instance, EDAPT staff hosted booths and distributed resources at numerous public events that interfaced with the older adult community, such as Congresswoman Jackie Speier and Supervisor Adrienne Tossier's 28<sup>th</sup> annual Seniors on the Move Conference, which had over 700 seniors in attendance.

Materials developed included flyers on where to find the latest trainings, postcards to distribute, stickers to show solidarity, and promotional items with the campaign messaging such as magnets, hand sanitizers, and eye glass repair kits to bring messaging into homes. A website was also set up with that hosted information on signs and symptoms of abuse, how to report abuse and the importance behind doing so, and information on the latest senior scam in San Mateo County [www.smchealth.org/ElderAbuse](http://www.smchealth.org/ElderAbuse). Advertisements ran in the San Jose Mercury News and on public transportation in English and Spanish on San Mateo County's bus system SamTrans as well as on Caltrain.

Information is shared on social media channels (Facebook and Twitter), monitors at County Center, San Mateo Medical Center, the Department of Housing, and the Human Services Agency, through elected officials newsletters, and through NextDoor.

**Could this campaign be replicated or transferred to other jurisdictions? Please explain.**

This campaign can be replicated in other jurisdictions by setting up a partnership between agencies working to prevent elder abuse with similar messaging that instills a sense of shared responsibility for those who may be unable to protect themselves.

**What partners did you work with in planning and implementing this campaign?**

EDAPT is collaboration between San Mateo County's District Attorney's Office, County Counsel's Office, Health System's Aging and Adult Services, and law enforcement. The initiative is funded with approximately \$3.13 million taxpayer dollars over two years through the County's Measure A, the voter-approved half-cent sales tax.

Early in the campaign, the EDAPT Advisory Committee was formed together to provide community input to staff, which has members that were selected to represent specific high risk groups. Committee members were chosen in part because of the underserved communities some represented. EDAPT staff report to the Adult Abuse Prevention Collaborative, which is a subset of the Commission on Aging as well as the entire Commission on Aging. The Commission on Aging, Commission on Disabilities and Adult Abuse Prevention Collaborative have been involved in order to seek their input on branding and outreach opportunities.

We have established long-term partnerships with Assemblymember Kevin Mullin's office to partner with him on their ongoing series of "Senior Scamstoppers" events throughout his Assembly District, and have spoken to numerous respected medical providers throughout San Mateo County, including Kaiser Permanente, Fair Oaks Medical Center, Golden Gate Regional Center, and the San Mateo Medical Center.

**To what extent does the campaign leverage existing resources without creating new costs?**

Through targeted outreach, the initiative raises awareness about the importance of calling the San Mateo County TIES line 1-800-675-8437 if someone suspects or is experiencing abuse. TIES line staff already answer questions about the wide variety of services available through the County and in the community. The TIES line is the main entry point for services provided by the Aging and Adult Services Division. It is San Mateo County's 24-hour information and emergency response line. It helps seniors, people with disabilities, dependent adults, and caregivers access the services they need to keep them safe. The TIES line is staffed by knowledgeable and experienced social workers and public health nurses who are prepared to help with reports of elder abuse.

## OUTCOMES

**Did you test or evaluate your campaign? If so, how?**

To test our campaign, we evaluated advertising impressions, website and social media analytics, number of trainings and outreach events attended, and anecdotal feedback on understanding of elder abuse and how to help.

**What were the outcomes of this campaign? To what extent were your objectives achieved?**

Just approaching the six month mark of this campaign, we have made significant headway in increasing the number of elder abuse calls to the TIES line. EDAPT officially began receiving referrals January of 2016. From January 2016 to April 2016 there have been 3,790 calls. During this same time period in 2015, there were 3,321. Since the launch of the EDAPT campaign there have been 469 new calls to the TIES line. We have made direct contact with over 1,300 people in outreach events and trainings, and hundreds more have been reached through resource fairs and outreach events. Our campaign advertisements have people where they are. Our San Jose Mercury News advertisement was sent to 690,000 households in San Mateo County. Our SamTrans advertisements reached over 200,000 people in English and Spanish. Caltrain advertisements reached over 3 million Caltrain riders who now know the prevalence of elder abuse and what to do to help. Since January 1, the elder abuse page on the website has had 1,715 page views, with an average of 3 minutes and 22 second on the page. The TIES 24-hour emergency and advice line receives 1,256 views since January 1, with an average of 2 minutes and 26 seconds on the page.

**To what extent does the campaign shift thinking about health from individual medical care to community / public health / equity issues?**

EDAPT is one of the many programs in Aging and in Adult Services that is embracing a more collaborative and multi-disciplinary focus model to addressing some of County's most challenging health and social problems. EDAPT understands that the common practice of working in silos is not cost effective, beneficial for the populations served and is missing the opportunity to tap into the resources, talents and services that are available in the community via public and private entities. Adopting a collective multidisciplinary approach helps to ensure that people who are in need of preventive and advocacy services are provided such services in an equitable manner in order to prevent anyone from falling through the cracks of the various social services systems that at times can be challenging to navigate.

At a recent event, one of our trainers ran into the head of San Mateo County Meals on Wheels (MOW) program who mentioned that she had given her MOW volunteers a truncated version of my training to her volunteers, and included the bruising guide. One of their volunteers reported back that when he

dropped off an elderly woman's meal, she was bruised extensively on the face. And the "bruising guide" indicated that might be suspicious. The MOW coordinator went out and did a home visit that day and found that the MOW recipient was having an issue with frequent falling. She notified the lady's children so that they might take steps to modify her home. Although this wasn't a direct abuse case, it is good to know that our elder abuse education is being disseminated and we have more eyes "looking" out for it. By rising awareness throughout the county, we are bringing elder abuse out of the shadows and into the forefront of people's minds so they know to be on alert.

**To what extent were earned media articles, letters to the editor, and op-eds published about this project?**

EDAPT representatives have been featured on Chinese Journal, a Cantonese-language public access show shown throughout the Bay Area, our local Telemundo affiliate, and on radio show "Your Legal Rights," available nationally through National Public Radio. We also have had extensive coverage in the local papers, the San Mateo County Times and San Mateo Daily Journal.

**To what extent does the campaign inform and lead to personal and collective action to improve population health?**

The campaign's main message is to protect others, building off the model if you see something, say something. It's up to all of us to protect older adults in our community. By fostering a greater sense of community, we can break down barriers and help ensure everyone is able to age without fear of abuse in our county.

**How have you used what you have learned from this experience? How will use what you have learned to improve your next communications campaign?**

Our agency partnerships have been instrumental in a successful campaign. Having voices from each of our agencies speak to elder abuse through their respective lens has helped address the various facets of this complex issue.

## INNOVATION

**How were youth, disadvantaged populations, and other groups at high risk included in the development and public voice of the campaign?**

The EDAPT Advisory Committee was put together to provide community input to staff. The individuals were chosen in part because of the underserved communities some represented. They report to the Adult Abuse Prevention Collaborative, which is a subset of the Commission on Aging as well as the entire Commission on Aging.

**Were social media, mobile phones, and other technology utilized in the campaign?**

Social media channels were used – Facebook and Twitter. Posts like "Have an older parent or loved one in your life? Learn the signs of elder financial abuse & how to stop it: <http://bit.ly/1TfqomO> 1,085" has helped us reach over 5,000 people on social media. We also promote the hashtag #SeeStopPrevent.

**Can we share this application with other local health officials who are interested in communications best practices?**

Absolutely!

**Please email your completed application by Friday, May 27, 2016 to:**

Kat DeBurgh, Executive Director

Health Officers Association of California

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