



Dear Fellow Delawarean,

When it comes to protecting our families, safeguarding our wallets, knowing our rights as victims of crime, or understanding how the law can make our communities better, information is the key. Equipped with knowledge, we can make choices that greatly reduce our risk of becoming a victim of crime or fraud, and we can learn how to get help if we're mistreated.

The mission of the Delaware Department of Justice is to protect Delawareans from harm by enforcing the law and being your advocate. We're here to help you, and also to give you the information you need to help yourself and your family. Inside this brochure, you'll learn how to identify patient abuse and neglect and how to report it to the Department of Justice. Together, we can keep Delaware safe and strong.

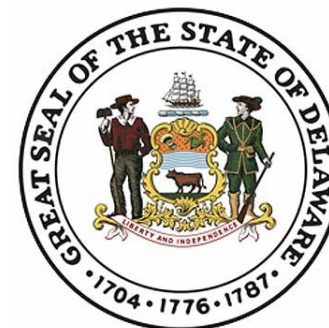
Beau Biden  
Attorney General

Delaware Department of Justice  
820 North French Street  
Wilmington, DE 19801

# Preventing Patient Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation

## Protecting Delaware's Citizens

Delaware Department of Justice



**Attorney General  
Joseph R. "Beau" Biden, III**

### Division of Fraud and Consumer Protection

- New Castle County • (302) 577-8400
- Kent County • (302) 739-7641
- Sussex County • (302) 856-5353

Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Hotline  
(302)577-5000

[www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov](http://www.attorneygeneral.delaware.gov)

## PROTECTING DELAWAREANS

The Attorney General's **Medicaid Fraud Control Unit** investigates and prosecutes patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

The Medicaid Fraud Control Unit protects residents who receive Medicaid and the taxpayers who fund the program. Its professional staff of prosecutors, investigators, and auditors review a wide range of allegations, including:

1. **Criminal and/or civil fraud** by healthcare providers who provide services to Medicaid recipients;
2. **Criminal abuse or neglect** of patients in residential healthcare facilities, including nursing homes, hospitals, group homes, and mental health facilities; and
3. **Theft or misuse** of funds belonging to patients in residential healthcare facilities.

## PATIENT ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Patients residing in healthcare facilities and state-licensed group homes, including nursing homes and mental health facilities, have special protection under Delaware law. Because they are often completely dependent upon the facilities that are providing them care, these patients are particularly vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Under Delaware law, patient abuse, neglect, and exploitation includes physical, sexual, emotional, or financial crimes committed against a patient. Certain behavior may rise to the level of emotional abuse even without physical contact. Criminal neglect may occur when a caregiver fails to provide treatment or care that is necessary to maintain the health or safety of the patient.

Delaware law provides enhanced penalties for crimes against infirm victims.

**REPORT PATIENT ABUSE  
CALL THE MEDICAID  
FRAUD CONTROL UNIT  
302-577-5000**

## HOW CAN I STOP ABUSE AND NEGLECT?

Abused or neglected patients are often totally dependent on the offender and are afraid to report being abused for fear of reprisal. It is especially important that others watch for warning signs, such as:

- lack of personal cleanliness
- bedsores and skin lesions
- unexplained injuries or complaints of pain without obvious injury
- bruises or burns suggesting the use of instruments, cigarettes, etc.
- lack of reaction to pain
- fear of being alone with caregivers
- sexually transmitted diseases
- malnutrition