



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Councilwoman Melissa Cabello Havrda

COPIES TO: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Debbie Racca-Sittre, City Clerk; Andrew Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to City Council

SUBJECT: Elder Abuse Reporting

DATE: 12/4/2023

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the City Council:

A request for City of San Antonio Departments, including but not limited to the San Antonio Police Department, San Antonio Fire Department, Human Services, Neighborhood and Housing Services, and Metro Health, which come into contact with senior citizens to establish a requirement for all elder abuse and neglect calls to be reported to the Texas Adult Protective Services Department (APS).

Background

Senior citizens (defined by APS as those 60 years of age and older, and by the Texas criminal code as those 65 years of age and older) are among the most vulnerable members of our community. The most common types of elder abuse are:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Abandonment
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Self-neglect

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2023 DEC 20 PM03:19:18



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In Bexar County, over the last ten years, APS case intake has increased from 7,969 to 10,404. The following table illustrates the Bexar County APS validated and unvalidated elder abuse cases for 2022.

Case Type	Total	Validated	Non validated
Emotional/verbal abuse	958	92	866
Exploitation	1198	104	1094
Medical neglect	1507	778	729
Mental health neglect	34	21	7
Physical abuse	1041	152	889
Physical neglect	6848	3721	3127
Sexual abuse	61	2	59
Total	11,647	4,870	6,771

In consultation with Bexar County Probate Court 2 Judge Veronica Vazquez, we have concluded that a comprehensive elder abuse reporting policy is needed to fill the gap of cases that go unreported to APS. All reports of elder abuse, regardless of validation or follow up, should be considered with equal seriousness.

The San Antonio Police Department (SAPD) reports all criminal offenses related to elderly abuse as defined by the Texas Penal Code. Adult Protective Services (APS) contacts SAPD when they have a case which they believe is criminal in nature and may have been reported by someone other than law enforcement.

This CCR will require that all calls regardless whether there is a criminal offense or not be reported to APS by all City Departments including SAPD.

This comprehensive reporting of elder abuse calls would also explore requiring all City of San Antonio personnel who come into contact with elders (SAPD, SAFD, DHS, NHSD, Metro Health, etc.) receive training to identify all types of elder abuse as defined by Texas APS abuse

COSA - CITY CLERK
2023 DEC 20 PM03:19:32



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categories - e.g.: emotional abuse, exploitation, medical neglect, mental health neglect, physical neglect, financial exploitation, and sexual abuse.

Our community's elders deserve no less. The intent of this CCR is to ensure that no senior who is potentially being abused or neglected falls through the cracks. Elder abuse and neglect is not always clear and in most situations can't be determined in the 10-15 minutes that a City employee with no specific training, or an SAPD officer, has to evaluate a call or interview. A required report to APS every time an allegation is made will ensure that trained professionals can evaluate the situation and offer the assistance required.

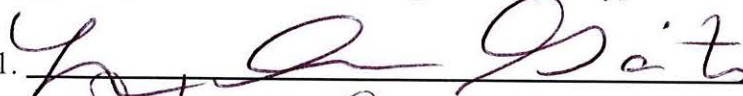

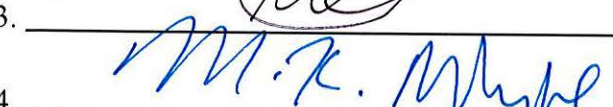

It is our belief that an administrative policy, while effective, will not carry the accountability of a Council-considered and approved policy.

Our elders, in their time, were accountable and responsible for our community's health and safety. The responsibility is now ours to account for their well being.

Submitted for Council consideration by:


District 6 Councilwoman Melissa Cabello Havrda

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (4 only)

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COSA - CITY CLERK
2023 DEC 20 PM03:19:46