



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO BRINGS STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER TO PREVENT ELDER ABUSE

SUSAN SERINO May 23, 2016

| ISSUE: **ELDER ABUSE, SENIORS**

| COMMITTEE: **AGING**



ALBANY, NY— Senator Sue Serino (R, C, I—Hyde Park) today brought together a diverse group of aging advocates and community leaders to participate in a roundtable discussion on preventing elder abuse in New York.

Serino, who Chairs the Senate Committee on Aging said, “With our aging population growing significantly throughout New York, as a state we have a vested interest in ensuring the health and safety of our seniors. More importantly, we have a responsibility to our seniors—who have spent their lives

building the communities we know and love—to ensure that they can live out their Golden years free from harm and safe from abuse.”

The event explored elder abuse in the broadest sense with participants discussing ways to deter financial abuse and exploitation, physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and active or passive neglect as well as self-neglect.

Senator Serino held a similar event in Poughkeepsie in December of 2015. As a result of information gathered at that roundtable, Serino fought for the inclusion of funding in the State Budget that will help expand an enhanced multi-disciplinary team (E-MDT) program renowned for its success in halting and preventing elder abuse.

The program began as federally funded pilots in New York City and in the Finger Lakes. The pilots were aimed at improving systems collaboration and awareness of investigating and intervening in complex cases of elder financial exploitation and elder abuse.

Initial reports from these pilots have shown significant results in preventing the exploitation of older adults and the successful prosecution of criminal cases, with the Finger Lakes site alone reporting that \$514,000 has already been directed to be repaid by a court or agreed upon in repayment plans.

The funding provided in this year's state budget will help those programs expand to empower seniors across the state and Annemarie Cook of Lifespan, a key partner in implementing the pilots, was on hand today to provide an overview and explanation of their functioning.

Also discussed at today's roundtable was the issue of raising awareness and increasing reporting of elder abuse. According to the National Council on Aging, up to five million cases of elder abuse occur each year, across the country, and researchers estimate that up to 85%

of those incidents go unreported.

“Information is power,” Serino continued. “Raising awareness about this pervasive issue is key to empowering our seniors, their caretakers and their families to reduce the incidents of elder abuse.”

To this end, Serino introduced legislation that would authorize the State Office for the Aging to conduct a public education campaign relating to elder abuse (S. 6923) in order to raise broad awareness across the state. She also sponsors legislation that would enlist healthcare practitioners as partners in identifying and reporting incidents of abuse or maltreatment of their patients (S. 6925).

Participants of today’s roundtable included:

- Andrea Cianfrani- LiveOn
- Ann Marie Cook- Lifespan
- Alan Lawitz- NYS Office of Children and Family Services, Senior Attorney
- Greg Olsen-NYS Office for the Aging, Acting Director
- Laura Palmer- AARP, Associate State Director
- Kathy Sheehan- Mediation Center for Dutchess County Coordinator
- Pat Sheldon-Dutchess County Protective Services for Adults
- Todd Tancredi- Director of the Office for the Aging Dutchess County
- Jane Ginsburg-NYS Alzheimer's Association, Executive Director