The mission of the Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC) is to protect adults with disabilities from abusive acts and omissions of their caregivers through investigation, oversight, public awareness and prevention.

What is the DPPC?

The DPPC is an independent state agency created by M.G.L. c.19C to protect adults with mental and physical disabilities, between the ages of 18 and 59, from abuse or neglect by their caregiver(s) whether in a private, family, or state care setting.

The DPPC receives and screens reports of deaths, and suspected physical, emotional, and sexual abuse or omission (neglect), makes referrals, conducts investigations, oversees investigations conducted by other state agencies, and insures that appropriate protective services are provided when abuse has been substantiated or risk is determined.

The Commission conducts Commissioners' Investigations which probe systemic problems contributing to abuse, and Retaliation Investigations, which examine allegations that reporters have been retaliated against for providing information to the DPPC.

State Police Detective Unit

The State Police Detective Unit (SPDU) is a law enforcement unit within DPPC which reviews all reports to determine whether it appears a crime has been committed. The SPDU investigates allegations of abuse against individuals with disabilities and when appropriate refers reports for investigation to local law enforcement and/or the District Attorney's office.

The principal purpose of the SPDU is to insure a rapid and effective response to complaints of abuse against persons with disabilities by law enforcement. Prior to the implementation of the SPDU there were no statewide standards for referring complaints of criminal abuse against persons with disabilities to law enforcement agencies. The successful investigation and prosecution of crimes against victims with disabilities requires standard investigative and prosecutorial approaches which include awareness of the unique circumstances in dealing with victims who are disabled. SPDU law enforcement procedure included a recognition of the clinical implications of dealing with victims who may have a limited capacity to participate with the investigation and who may be clinically traumatized by the crime committed against them.

Did you know?
The Disabled Persons Protection Commission:

- Is the central point to access law enforcement and abuse protective services for persons with disabilities.
- Receives approximately 4,500 reports of abuse annually.
- Operates a 24-hour Hotline to receive reports of alleged abuse.
- Conducts investigations into deaths when it is suspected that the death was caused by an act or omission by a caregiver.
- Oversees the conduct of M.G.L. c. 19C investigations referred to other agencies for investigation.
- Conducts independent investigations.
- Provides free training on an overview of M.G.L. c. 19C and identifying stress and preventing abuse for both professional and non-professional caregivers.
- Recommends and monitors the provision of appropriate protective services when abuse is substantiated or risk is determined.
- Maintains an extensive Resource Library of abuse prevention materials.
REPORT SUSPECTED ABUSE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

DPPC HOTLINE

V/TTY
1-800-426-9009

24 hours - 7 days a week, including holidays

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Disabled Persons Protection Commission (DPPC)

50 Ross Way
Quincy, MA 02169

Office Hours: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Monday - Friday
(617) 727-6465 V/TTY (800) 245-0062 V/TTY (517) 727-6469 FAX
HOTLINE (800) 426-9009 V/TTY

WEBSITE: http://www.state.ma.us/dppc
Screened in as an emergency, a non-emergency or screened out if it does not meet the criteria of M.G.L. c. 19C.

Referred to other state agencies (DMR, DMH, MRC, DPH, DSS) whether screened in or screened out.

Reviewed by the State Police Detective Unit to determine whether it appears a crime has been committed.

Immediately assigned to an oversight officer, who assesses the level of risk and insures that immediate protective services are implemented, if necessary.

Referred to local law enforcement and/or the District Attorney’s office when appropriate.

Indicators of possible physical abuse:
- Puncture wounds
- Bruises on several different surface areas
- Bruises in various stages of healing
- Multiple bruises, or bruises forming patterns or clusters
- Human bite marks
- Fracture to ribs, skull, arms and leg bones
- Unexplained internal injuries
- Bilateral bruises (e.g. top of shoulders, both sides of face, insides of both thighs)
- Burns shaped like an object (e.g. iron, cigarette), especially on soles of feet, palms, back or buttocks

Indicators of possible emotional abuse:
- Increased anxiety
- Fearful of others
- Depression
- Appears withdrawn
- Lowered confidence level
- Shame
- Lowered self-esteem
- Changes in the individual’s ability to function

Indicators of possible neglect:
- Lack of clothing or improperly clothed for weather conditions
- Ducubiti (bedsore), skin rashes
- Dehydration
- Malnutrition
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Vaginal infections

Indicators of possible sexual abuse:
- Torn or stained clothing and/or bedding
- Pregnancy
- Vaginal or rectal bleeding
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Vaginal infections

MANDATED REPORTERS of abuse and neglect:
Persons who, as a result of their professions, are more likely to hear about or see abuse of persons with disabilities, and so are required to report suspected cases of abuse to the DPPC. The following is a list of mandated reporters:

- Medical personnel
- Medical Examiners
- Social Workers
- Foster Parents
- Police Officers
- Dentists
- Public or private school teachers
- Educational administrators

- Psychologists
- Guidance or family counselors
- Daycare workers
- Employees of private agencies providing services to pec disabilities
- Employees of state agencies within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services

* NOTE: Mandated reporters are immune from any civil or criminal liability as a result of filing a report and are subject to a fine of up to $1,000 for failure to file a report.