

Loved one in a nursing home?  
Learn about signs of abuse and neglect.



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Welcome back to the Leone Law, LLC e-newsletter. Our firm provides legal solutions for individuals and businesses throughout Rhode Island and Massachusetts. We focus on dispute resolution in civil matters.

We represent people who have suffered serious personal injuries. Increasingly, individuals and families who have been victims of nursing home abuse and neglect are asking for our help. Whether it be a car, truck, or motorcycle crash, a doctor's or hospital's negligence, or in any other case where you or a loved one has been harmed through no fault of your own, Leone Law, LLC can help.

In each newsletter, we will address a legal topic and provide important safety information for consumers. If you would like to submit a topic for a future newsletter, please [contact us](#) with your request.

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## **NURSING HOME ABUSE & NEGLECT: WARNING SIGNS**

In this issue, we will start looking at signs of elder abuse and neglect in nursing homes. Nursing homes should be a place for the aging population to live the remainder of their lives or rehabilitate from illness or injury with as much comfort and care as possible. A good nursing home makes its residents feel safe, ensures a healthy diet and lifestyle, and provides treatment customized to each resident's medical conditions and situation. Throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and across the country, these facilities should provide a better quality of life while bringing happiness and comfort to the elderly, one of our most vulnerable populations.

There are several forms of nursing home abuse and neglect including: physical abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, emotional or psychological abuse and financial exploitation. In this issue, we look at physical abuse and neglect.

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE IN NURSING HOMES**

Physical abuse is defined as the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. Physical abuse may include but is not limited to such acts of violence as striking (with or without an object), beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, slapping, kicking, pinching, and burning. In addition, inappropriate use of drugs and physical restraints, force-feeding, and physical punishment of any kind also are examples of physical abuse.

Signs and symptoms of physical abuse include but are not limited to:

- bruises, black eyes, welts, and lacerations;
- bone fractures, broken bones, and skull fractures;
- open wounds, cuts, punctures, untreated injuries in various stages of healing;
- sprains, dislocations, and internal injuries/bleeding;

- broken eyeglasses/frames, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, and signs of being restrained;
- laboratory findings of medication overdose or under utilization of prescribed drugs;
- an elder's report of being hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated;
- an elder's sudden change in behavior; and
- the caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see an elder alone.

## **NEGLECT IN NURSING HOMES**

Neglect is defined as the refusal or failure to fulfill any part of a person's obligations or duties to an elder. Neglect typically means the refusal or failure to provide an elderly person with such life necessities as food, water, clothing, personal hygiene, medicine, comfort, personal safety, and other essentials included in an implied or agreed-upon responsibility to a resident.

Signs and symptoms of neglect include but are not limited to:

- dehydration, malnutrition, untreated bed sores, and poor personal hygiene;
- unattended or untreated health problems;
- hazardous or unsafe living condition (e.g., broken heaters, or no running water);
- unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g. dirt, fleas, lice on person, soiled bedding, fecal/urine smell, inadequate clothing); and
- an elder's report of being mistreated.

## **WHAT IF I SUSPECT ABUSE, NEGLECT OR EXPLOITATION?**

If someone is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police for immediate help. If the danger is not immediate, but you suspect that abuse has occurred or is occurring, please tell someone. To report elder abuse, contact the Adult Protective Services (APS) agency in the state where the elder resides. You can find the APS reporting number for each state by visiting:

The State Resources section of the [National Center on Elder Abuse website](#)  
[The Eldercare Locator website](#) or calling 1-800-677-1116.

### **Contact Information Specific to Rhode Island**

Rhode Island Adult Protective Services: [\(401\) 462-0555](#)

For suspected elder mistreatment in the home

Rhode Island State Long Term Care Ombudsman: [\(401\) 785-3340](#)

For suspected elder mistreatment in LTC facilities

Rhode Island Attorney General Elder Abuse Unit: [\(401\) 274-4400](#) x 2269

To report medicare fraud or patient abuse and neglect

Rhode Island Department of Health Assisted Living Services: [\(401\) 222-2566](#)

If you or someone you know has been the victim of abuse, exploitation, or neglect, you are not alone. Many people care and can help. Please tell your doctor, a friend, or a family member you trust, or call the Eldercare Locator help line immediately.

Source: [National Center on Elder Abuse - Administration on Aging](#)

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## NEWS FROM LEONE LAW

We are excited to share some highlights of what's been happening at the firm in the last few months:

Anthony was named to the 2015 list of Rhode Island Super Lawyers® by Super Lawyers® magazine and featured in the November 2015 issue of Rhode Island Monthly.

He also presented a Continuing Legal Education program on Senior Abuse, Neglect, & Injuries for the Rhode Island Bar Association.

Additionally, Anthony enjoyed another semester teaching Law Office Management as an adjunct professor at Roger Williams University School of Law and recently completed teaching a new perspectives course at RWU Law entitled Senior Abuse, Neglect and Injuries.



Finally, Anthony was proud to successfully try a slip and fall case to verdict that resulted in a judgment in excess of \$800,000 to help his injured client. The case involved a hotel that allowed a known wet floor condition to exist without any warning to customers. Our client slipped and fell on the wet floor and suffered a herniated disc that resulted in two surgeries and many injections. The jury returned its verdict after a week-long trial. We were thrilled with the outcome for our client and subsequent settlement of the case.

## QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?

If you have questions about the treatment of a loved one in a nursing home or would like more information about nursing home abuse and neglect, please feel free to contact us or [visit our website](#).

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