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Coordinated Community Response

Investigative Agencies in Tennessee Responding to Abuse of Vulnerable Adults

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The Tennessee Department of Human Services, Coordinated Community Response (CCR) to Protect Vulnerable Adults by TN State Agencies is supported by Adult Protective Services with funding by the Administration for Community Living. Our GOAL is to improve the investigation, response and delivery of protective services to vulnerable adults in Tennessee.

Department of Human Services, Adult Protective Services (APS)

Investigates reports of abuse and neglect by a caregiver, financial exploitation of government funds, self-neglect and sexual assault. APS is not just for the elderly. APS helps adults 18 years of age or older who, because of a mental or physical impairment or advanced age, are unable to care for themselves. Additionally, APS makes referrals to resources within the community for further assistance and to help keep the individual in the safest environment. Investigations take about 60 days to complete. <http://tn.gov/humanservices/article/adult-protective-services>

TCA Code 71-6-110 Mandatory Duty to Report: Any resident in TN who suspects abuse, neglect or exploitation of a vulnerable adult, including those over the age of 60, must make a referral to Adult Protective Services.

Department of Health (TDH)

Investigates all health care facilities and health care professionals that are licensed in Tennessee. Investigations can require up to 100 days to complete. TDH also serves as the repository for Abuse Registry referrals from all agencies of state government. <http://tn.gov/health>

Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD)

Investigates allegations of abuse, neglect or exploitation (ANE), serious injury of unknown cause (SIUC), suspicious injuries and suspicious or unexplained death for persons receiving services with DIDD, Intermediate Care Facilities for ID/DD or Employment and Community First (ECF) via TennCare. Investigations take 30 days to complete. <https://www.tn.gov/didd/divisions/protection-from-harm.html>

Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)

Investigates reports for those with substance abuse and/or mental health diagnosis or potential diagnosis, and residing in, or being served by a TDMHSAS licensed facility. Investigations are strived to be completed within 60 days of the first report. <http://tn.gov/behavioral-health>

Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit

Investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. Investigation must have a Medicaid nexus. <https://www.tn.gov/tbi/divisions/criminal-investigation-division/medicaid-fraud-control-unit.html>

Disability Rights Tennessee

Monitors and investigates reports of abuse and/or neglect in licensed and unlicensed facilities or programs that provide services to people of all ages with disabilities. These facilities or programs could include: board and care homes, mental health institutions, jails and prisons, nursing homes, juvenile detention facilities, residential behavioral health settings, day programs, and more. The length of monitoring or investigation is determined on a case by case basis. <http://www.disabilityrightstn.org/>

TN Commission on Aging and Disability (TCAD)

The Ombudsman advocates on behalf of nursing home residents to make sure the resident's rights, health, and safety are protected. Complaints are investigated within a set time frame (maximum of seven days) and the Ombudsman strives to resolve matters to the satisfaction of the resident. <http://tn.gov/aging>

TN Commerce and Insurance

- **Consumer Affairs Division:** Serves as the central coordinating agency and clearinghouse for complaints by TN consumers alleging unfair or deceptive acts or practices by a person. Examples include home improvement/repair, professional services, motor vehicle repair/sales, utilities, landlord/tenant, timeshares/vacation clubs, health products/services related to billing, etc. The Division of Consumer Affairs works with the TN Attorney General's office in the investigation of alleged violations. <http://tn.gov/commerce/section/consumer-affairs>
- **Securities Division:** Investigates both investment fraud and insurance agents. Investment fraud includes those who are brokers, dealers and investment advisors (ex, Ponzi and pyramid schemes, etc.). Insurance fraud investigates insurance agents (aka, misappropriation of funds). This division does not deal with consumer fraud, only the industry side for investigations. Statutorily, they have to complete insurance fraud investigations within 2 years but internally they want to complete the investigation within 6 months. Investment cases have no statutory compliance but they strive for the same time frame. <https://www.tn.gov/commerce/securities-division.html>

TN Attorney General Consumer Protection and Advocate Division

Investigates allegations of unfair or deceptive trade practices and files civil enforcement actions when appropriate. <https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/working-for-tennessee/protecting-consumers.html>

TN Department of Financial Institutions (TDFI)

Investigates consumer complaints involving financial institutions regulated by TDFI including state-chartered banks, credit unions and other consumer lenders. Once a complaint is filed, it is sent to the institution for a response which they need to complete within 15 business days. If the appropriate regulatory division (bank, credit union, compliance) has to be brought in for further review of the complaint, the length of time can be extended. TDFI works mainly with TN Commerce and Insurance and the Attorney General's Office. <http://tn.gov/tdfi>