Office of Governor Mark Dayton

Actions Already Underway to Improve Oversight and Investigation of Older and Vulnerable Adult Abuse

Minnesota has nearly 2,000 privately-run nursing homes, housing with services, and assisted living settings, which together provide care to over 82,000 older and vulnerable adults.

The Minnesota Department of Health's Office of Health Facility Complaints (OHFC) is charged with ensuring that these Minnesotans—our parents, grandparents, and fellow citizens—get the safe, quality care they need. In recent years, the number allegations of abuse filed with the OHFC has increased more than 50 percent, reaching 24,100 total complaints last year.

OHFC has struggled to keep pace with the growth in complaints at private facilities, faced with the challenges of understaffing, inadequate management practices, and an antiquated case file system. Working with the Department of Human Services, the Department of Health has worked hard to improve operations and reduce the backlog of unreviewed abuse complaints. These efforts have already produced results, eliminating the backlog of more than 2,321 complaints since December 2017. Thanks to aggressive action taken by MDH and DHS, an interim system to electronically process complaints was implemented in February 2018, helping OHFC to more efficiently review the over 400 new complaints of elder abuse it receives each week.

Learn more below about how this partnership is resolving the reports and investigations backlog, and ensuring that all neglect, mistreatment, and abuse allegation are investigated in an efficient and effective manner.

Progress Made to Protect Older and Vulnerable Adults from Abuse	
Eliminated the Backlog in Unreviewed Reports of Abuse and Maltreatment	Department of Human Services and Department of Health have successfully eliminated the backlog of 2,231 reports of abuse and maltreatment since December 2017.
88 Percent Reduction in Overall Backlog	Between eliminating the backlog of unreviewed complaints and reducing pending investigations, the overall backlog of abuse complaints for older and vulnerable adults has been reduced by 88 percent. Department of Human Services and Department of Health are committed to ensuring that the remaining cases are investigated swiftly and thoroughly.

54 Percent Reduction in Pending Investigations of Abuse and Maltreatment	Department of Human Services and Department of Health have completed investigations of 448 cases of abuse and maltreatment since December 2017. This marks a 54 percent reduction in open investigations. The agencies are committed to ensuring that the remaining cases are investigated swiftly and thoroughly.

Actions to Improve the Reporting and Investigation Process

Established an Interagency Partnership to Quickly Resolve Backlog	The Minnesota Department of Health established a partnership with the Department of Human Services, which recently improved its own investigative process, to rapidly and thoroughly alleviate the backlog of allegations. Since December 2017, the two agencies have reduced the overall backlog by 88 percent and have developed new processes for ensuring the Office of Health Facility Complaints is able to keep up with new allegations in the future.
Implemented Interim Electronic Reporting System to Better Ensure Review of Allegations	Thanks to aggressive action taken by MDH and DHS, an interim system to electronically process complaints was implemented in February 2018, helping OHFC to more efficiently review the over 400 new complaints of elder abuse it receives each week.
Adopted New Workflow for Handling Complaints to Improve Efficiency and Ensure Consistency	Previously, the Office of Health Facility Complaints had been unable to keep pace with a more than 50 percent increase in allegations since 2012. This year, OHFC worked with Department of Human Services to improve its process for reviewing and investigating allegations of maltreatment and abuse. Thanks to these reforms, Office of Health Facility Complaints has been able to greatly improve efficiency.