

46-451. Definitions; program goals

A. In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Abuse" means:

- (a) Intentional infliction of physical harm.
- (b) Injury caused by negligent acts or omissions.
- (c) Unreasonable confinement
- (d) Sexual abuse or sexual assault.

2. "De facto conservator" means any person who takes possession of the estate of a vulnerable adult, without right or lawful authority. A de facto conservator is subject to all of the responsibilities that attach to a legally appointed conservator or trustee.

3. "De facto guardian" means any person who takes possession of the person of a vulnerable adult, without right or lawful authority. A de facto guardian is subject to all of the responsibilities that attach to a legally appointed guardian.

4. "Exploitation" means the illegal or improper use of a vulnerable adult or his resources for another's profit or advantage.

5. "Informed consent" means any of the following:

(a) A written expression by the person that the person fully understands the potential risks and benefits of the withdrawal of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health and that the person desires that the services be withdrawn. A written expression is valid only if the person is of sound mind and if the consent is witnessed by at least two individuals who do not benefit by the withdrawal of services.

(b) Consent to withdraw food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health as permitted by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction.

(c) A declaration made pursuant to title 36, chapter 32.

(d) Consent by another person under a durable power of attorney relating to health care services to withdraw food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health.

6. "Neglect" means a pattern of conduct without the person's informed consent resulting in deprivation of food, water, medication, medical services, shelter, cooling, heating or other services necessary to maintain minimum physical or mental health.

7. "Protective services" means a program of identifiable and specialized social services that may offer social services appropriate to resolve problems of abuse, exploitation or neglect of a vulnerable adult.

8. "Protective services worker" means a person who has been selected by and trained under the requirements prescribed by the department to provide protective services.

9. "Vulnerable adult" means an individual who is eighteen years of age or older and who is unable to protect himself from abuse, neglect or exploitation by others because of a physical or mental impairment. Vulnerable adult includes an incapacitated person as defined in section 14-5101.

B. Protective services programs shall seek to maintain the adult in his familiar environment by strengthening his capacity for self-maintenance or by providing supportive services.

C. Nothing in this section shall be construed to mean that an adult is abused, neglected or in need of protective services for the sole reason that he relies on treatment from a recognized religious method of healing in lieu of medical treatment.

D. For the purposes of this section, a person is not exploited by a transfer of assets if the transfer is to obtain or maintain eligibility for benefits under title 36, chapter 29 or benefits for supplemental security income, medicare or veterans' administration programs and the transfer of assets is between the person and any of the following: