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**Mathias H. Heck, Jr.**  
**Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney**

**PRESS RELEASE**

June 15, 2010

**ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY**

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CRIMES UNIT  
Joshua M. Muennich,  
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Sandra M. Hunt, Director

Every year an estimated 2.1 million older Americans are victims of physical, psychological, financial or other forms of abuse and neglect. Some estimate that 90% of elder abuse and neglect incidents are committed by known perpetrators, usually family members. Those 80 years and older are abused at 2 - 3 times the rate of all other senior citizens. For every case of elder abuse and neglect reported to authorities, experts estimate that there may be as many as five cases that go unreported.

Shocking statistics such as these have prompted June 15 to be declared as "World Elder Abuse Awareness Day". This annual date is set aside, world-wide, to make the public aware of the maltreatment many seniors receive, and how the public can get involved.

Prosecuting Attorney Mat Heck, Jr. created the Adult Protection Unit in 2008 in order to take a pro-active approach to educate the community and our senior citizens about the victimization of the elderly.

Crimes against the elderly have risen in recent years and are expected to dramatically increase as the baby boomer population grows older. In addition, with the current economic conditions being experienced across the nation, seniors are especially at risk of financial crimes.

Many senior victims fail to report financial crimes or abuse due to feeling ashamed or guilty about being victimized. Their concerns of potential loss of independence, or fear of retaliation by the perpetrator, especially if it's a family member, are also factors in causing the activity to be underreported.

Prosecutor Heck, said, "It is estimated there are over 78,000 seniors in Montgomery County. Elder Abuse Awareness Day is observed in order to make the public aware of the abuse of seniors. I hope that through educating the community about these crimes, more people will be looking out for the well being of their elderly neighbors and friends."

Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Jennifer N. Heapy is the supervising attorney of the Adult Protection Unit. She can be reached at 937-225-5603 or e-mail to [heapyj@mcoho.org](mailto:heapyj@mcoho.org). On the web at <http://www.mcpc.org>.

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