



CANADIAN CENTRE FOR  
ELDER LAW

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1822 East Mall, University of British Columbia

Vancouver, British Columbia V6T 1Z1

Voice: (604) 822 0633 Fax: (604) 822 0144 E-mail: [ccels@bccli.org](mailto:ccels@bccli.org)

Website: [www.bccli.org/ccel](http://www.bccli.org/ccel)

A DIVISION OF THE BRITISH COLUMBIA LAW INSTITUTE

## Media Release

### World Elder Abuse Awareness Day – June 15

*for immediate release*

**Vancouver, 14 June 2010**—On June 15, 2010, the British Columbia Law Institute and the Canadian Centre for Elder Law will commemorate the fifth annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day started in Canada and is now observed around the world. The Day recognizes the mistreatment of older adults and highlights the need for appropriate action and prevention efforts.

“We are pleased that the prevention of elder abuse and neglect has received an increased focus in Canada in recent years,” said Executive Director, Jim Emmerton. “With increasing numbers of older adults in Canada, continued research and support activities will be needed to respond to expected increases in incidents of elder abuse and neglect.”

Statistics Canada projects the number of seniors in Canada will reach over 10 million by 2036, more than double the 4.7 million in 2009. Seniors are expected to outnumber children aged 14 and under for the first time between 2015 and 2021. Canada’s very elderly population is also projected to grow. By 2036, there could be 3.3 million people aged 80 and over, up from roughly 1.3 million in 2009. In 2009, there were about 6,000 centenarians. This number is projected to triple, or even quadruple.

As a result of the ageing population, there is increasing awareness and concern about improving the lives of the elderly. However, elder abuse and neglect remain largely invisible. Reported cases of elder abuse and neglect are only a snapshot of a much larger, under-recognized problem.

“We do not have reliable up-to-date statistics on how common elder abuse and neglect are in Canada,” said National Director, Laura Watts. “The most conservative statistics suggest 1 in 12 older Canadians are abused or neglected. We think it is much more likely that 1 in 6 to 1 in 8 are victims. The most commonly noted types of elder abuse are financial, physical, emotional and sexual, but the category also includes forced confinement and isolation, medication abuse, and neglect. The Canadian government has indicated its commitment to studying elder abuse and neglect, and we hope this prioritization will continue.”

The United Nations created the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, which recognized elder abuse and neglect as critical issues. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse launched the first World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2006.

Purple is the official colour of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The British Columbia Law Institute and the Canadian Centre for Elder Law encourage everyone to wear purple on June 15 as a visual demonstration in support of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.

The Canadian Centre for Elder Law strives to be a leader in law reform by carrying out the best in scholarly law reform research and writing and the best in outreach relating to law reform as they relate to older adults.

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Contact: Laura Watts  
National Director  
(604) 822-0142  
[lwatts@bcli.org](mailto:lwatts@bcli.org)