

REPORTING SUSPECTED ABUSE OF DEPENDENT ADULTS

Q: What are the responsibilities of clergy to report **suspected dependent adult abuse**?

A: Iowa has laws governing the reporting of **suspected abuse of dependent adults**. Generally, a dependent adult is any adult who is unable to protect his or her own interests or unable to adequately perform or obtain services necessary to meet essential human needs, as a result of a physical or mental condition. The statutory scheme for reporting suspected dependent adult abuse mirrors that of child-abuse reporting. There are **mandatory** reporters and **permissive** reporters.

Mandatory reporters include:

1. Members of the staff of community mental health centers
2. Peace officers
3. In-home homemaker-home health aides
4. Individuals employed as outreach persons
5. Health practitioners
6. Members of the staff or employees of supported community living services, sheltered workshops, or work activity centers
7. Social workers
8. Certified psychologists

Everyone else is a permissive reporter.

- All other persons, including clergy who are not otherwise classified as “mandatory” reporters, are “permissive” reporters and *may* but are not required to report suspected instances of dependent adult abuse.
- Persons reporting suspected dependent adult abuse have the same immunity as persons reporting suspected child abuse.