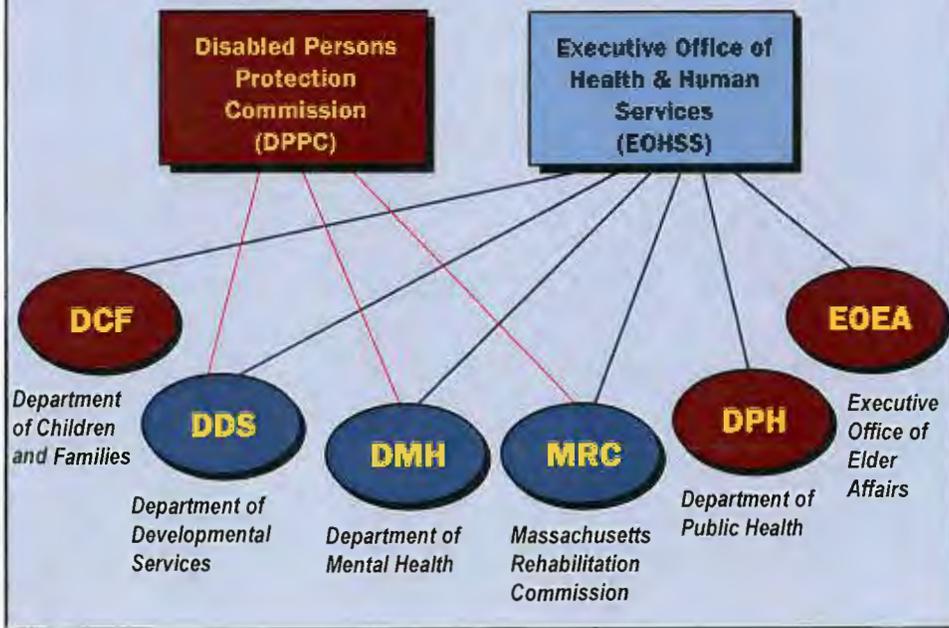




Disabled Persons Protection Commission

Susan Love
Abuse Prevention & Outreach
Coordinator

MA Government Structure & Oversight



DPPC History

- Created in 1987 as an independent state agency responsible for the investigation and remediation of instances of abuse against persons with disabilities within our Commonwealth (M.G.L.c.19C)



DPPC Profile

- Location: Braintree, Massachusetts
- Staffing
- Units
 - Administration Finance
 - Hotline/Intake
 - Investigations
 - Oversight
 - Legal
 - Informational Technology
 - Outreach and Prevention
- State Police Detective Unit



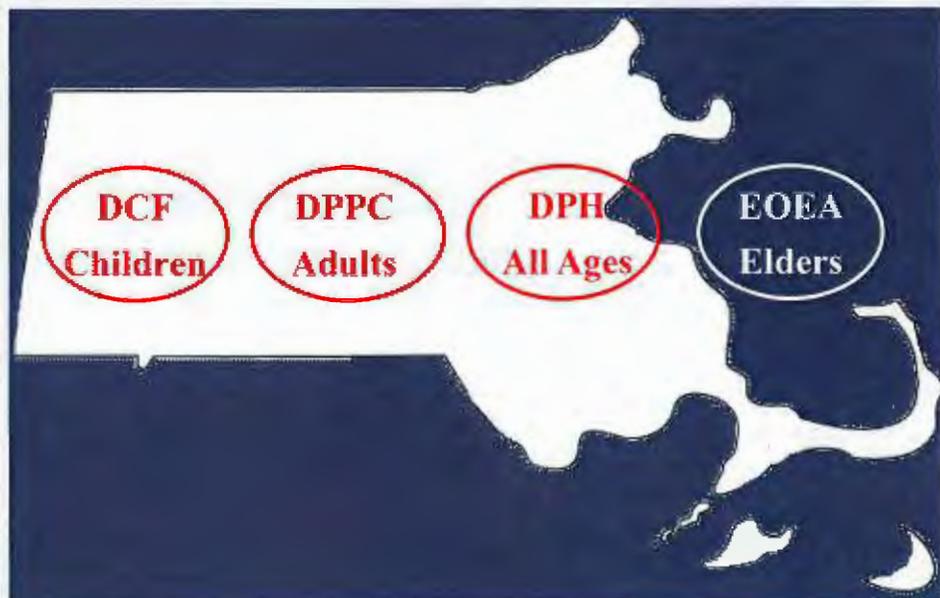
DPPC Statute M.G.L. c. 19C

➤ Jurisdiction:

- Person with a disability
- 18-59 years of age, and
- Wholly or partially dependent on others for daily living needs
- Abused by a caregiver

➤ Residing in state care or private setting

Civil Protection Agencies



Reporting Abuse, Neglect and Mistreatment of Persons with Disabilities

What is a Mandated Reporter

- A person, who as a result of their profession, is more likely to be aware of the abuse
- Mandated Reporters are required by law to report instances of **suspected** abuse to the DPPC Hotline
- (NOTE: *Anyone* can file a report of suspected abuse.)

Mandated Reporting

- Is an individual responsibility
(do not rely on others to file reports for you)
- Each reporter may have different information, or a different perspective to offer

Who are Mandated Reporters

- Medical personnel
- Medical examiners
- Social workers
- Foster parents
- Police Officers
- Dentists
- Public or private school teachers
- Educational administrators
- Psychologists
- Guidance or family counselors
- Day care workers
- Employees of private agencies providing services to people with disabilities
- Employees of state agencies within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services

What is Reportable?

- The standard for reporting suspected abuse or neglect in Massachusetts is *reasonable cause to believe* that abuse or neglect exists

Reasonable Cause to Believe

- Is a standard that is less than “probable cause”, but more than a non-specific gut feeling.
- Facts that could provide a reasonable person with *cause to believe* that abuse or neglect may exist could include:

Determining Reasonable Cause to Believe

- You witnessed abuse or neglect
- Someone reported it to you
- You observed an injury to an individual
- There are changes in the mood or behavior of the individual
- Other evidence, such as records, documents, photos, etc.

When Disclosures Occur...

- Stay calm and remain non-judgmental
- Be supportive and ensure the individual's safety
- Explain the requirement to immediately report to appropriate agencies and/or law enforcement
- Listen closely if the individual wants to talk

When Disclosures Occur...

- Gather essential information by asking questions about:
 - What happened?
 - Where and when it happened?
 - Who is the alleged abuser? Who else may have been present?
- Prevent loss or destruction of known evidence

Mandated Reporter Protection

- Identity of Reporters is **confidential**
- Mandated Reporters are immune from civil or criminal liability as a result of making a report
- DPPC will conduct investigations into allegations that people have been retaliated against for reporting or providing information to the DPPC

Failure to Report

- Failure to report can result in severe consequences for victims, other potential victims and Mandated Reporters
- Mandated Reporters, who fail to report, are subject to a fine of up to \$1,000

Types of Abuse

- Physical
- Emotional/verbal
- Sexual
- Neglect (Omission)
- Deaths

Financial Abuse

- Financial Abuse – DPPC receives reports and refers allegations to appropriate law enforcement or state agency
- DPPC does NOT investigate financial abuse

DPPC Intake Unit 24 HOUR HOTLINE

- Operates a 24-hour Hotline, 1-800-426-9009
- Receives reports of suspected **physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect and deaths** of adults with disabilities
- Evaluates reports to determine required response [emergency or non-emergency] and jurisdictional criteria
- Provides information and referrals to callers



How to File an Abuse Report

Call the DPPC 24-Hour Hotline at

1-800-426-9009

1-888-822-0350 TTY

In Case of an Emergency Call

Local Police or 911

followed by a call to the DPPC

DPPC Reporting Requirements

- File oral report immediately to DPPC Hotline
- File written report to DPPC within 48 hours of making oral report

Screening of Civil Cases

- Reports are screened 'in' or 'out'
- All screened out reports are referred to appropriate agencies for follow-up
- **Emergencies:**
 - Up to 24 hours to initiate investigation and assess for protective services
- **Non-Emergencies:**
 - Up to 10 calendar days to initiate investigation and assess for protective services

DPPC 19C Civil Investigations

Conducts abuse/neglect investigations,
assesses risk and recommends
protective service actions

DPPC

DDS

DMH

MRC

Protective Services

Protective Services are...

- Services provided to protect individuals in response to an incident of abuse or neglect
- Generally time limited, transitional in nature and act as a bridge between the crisis and on-going service delivery
- Implemented to **protect** individuals from being abused again and eliminate risk
- Are least restrictive in nature

Protective Service Examples

- Access Warrants
- Protective Orders
- Respite Care
- Emergency Shelter
- Restraining Orders
- Case Management
- Housing Assistance
- Adaptive Equipment
- Transportation
- Specialized Counseling (trauma-informed)
- Guardianship/GAL
- Counseling
- Financial Management
- Support Groups
- Employment/Vocational Services
- Legal Assistance
- PCA's/Home Health
- Clinical Evaluation
- Medical Assistance

Screening and Referral of Criminal Cases

State Police Detective Unit

➤ Comprised of:

- Sergeant
- Four State Troopers

➤ Functions:

- Screen all Hotline Reports for evidence of criminal activity
- Refer cases to DAs and local police
- Conduct investigations
- Train law enforcement personnel

DPPC/SPDU Criminal Screening

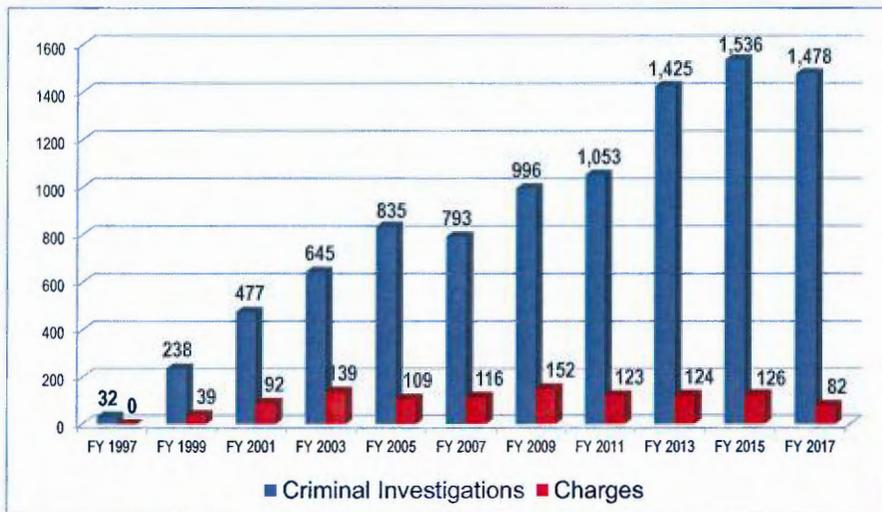
- District Attorney's office notified
- Designated Assistant District Attorney assigns criminal investigations to:
 - Local Police
 - State Police/D.A.'s Office
 - DPPC State Police Detective Unit (SPDU)
- Human Service agency contacts notified
- Civil Investigator proceeds with protective services



Abuse Reporting to DPPC Hotline FY1987-FY2017



Criminal Investigations/Criminal Charges DPPC Database FY2017



In Conclusion

- Knowledge of DPPC reporting procedures is essential
- In an emergency or when a crime is suspected of being committed:
Dial 911 Immediately
- When abuse and neglect is suspected, call the DPPC 24 Hour Hotline:
1-800-426-9009 1-888-822-0350 TTY