

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Photo available at:** <http://dhhs.ne.gov/PublishingImages/Jodi-Osborn.jpg>

**Photo caption:** Jodi Osborn, of Lincoln, holds a photo of her mother who was the victim of elder abuse and was murdered one year ago. During World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, Osborn urges Nebraskans to call the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-652-1999 if they suspect elder abuse.

**Note to editors:** This news release with a longer list of signs of elder abuse (beyond those bulleted items listed below) is available at: [http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Newsroom\\_Newsreleases\\_2014\\_June\\_ElderAbuse2.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Newsroom_Newsreleases_2014_June_ElderAbuse2.aspx)

## **Nebraska Woman Laments Mother's Abuse; Advises Others to Watch for Signs**

**Lincoln** – If only she and others had recognized the signs of elder abuse, perhaps the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline would have been called and her active and loving mother may be alive today, according to Jodi Osborn of Lincoln whose brother murdered her mother just one year ago this month.

Today, Osborn has joined the Department of Health and Human Services in recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15 as she speaks out to educate others about recognizing elder abuse and how to report it.

"Elder abuse sometimes is not easily recognized," Osborn said. "It's not always just something you can see, like physical abuse, or that you can find, like financial abuse. It can be mental abuse, as well, which may not be as obvious. A simple, anonymous call to the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-652-1999) could at least provide services and may save a loved one's life."

Thomas Pristow, director of Children and Family Services in DHHS, echoed Osborn and said the numbers are startling that while one in 10 Americans is a victim of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation, only one in 14 cases comes to the attention of authorities. Awareness of the signs of abuse are important to know so that we can protect the elderly.

“Unfortunately, there are many more situations like that faced by Jodi Osborn’s family that occur in Nebraska,” said Courtney Miller, deputy director in Medicaid and Long-Term Care. “Seniors are living longer, but as cognitive and physical abilities decline, it leaves them vulnerable to victimization. That’s why we all need to be on the lookout to protect the elderly.”

Osborn’s mother, Joan Robinson of San Diego, Calif., was active and in good health. Joan’s son, Dale, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia, had been evicted from another apartment and moved in with her. Family, and as many as eight friends, heard her repeat that she was mentally spent after he moved in, but they assumed it was caused by her busy schedule with grandchildren and watching over Dale.

Her mother also told friends she was concerned about Dale becoming violent. She even reached out to police two weeks before her death when he became angry.

“These were opportunities for someone to call a hotline so her situation could have been evaluated,” Osborn said. “I wish we had put those pieces together so my mother would have been monitored and provided services. More could have been done for her. It could have changed the history of our family.”

It is suspected that on June 30, 2013, Joan was fed up with her son’s use of drugs and told him to leave her home, but Dale didn’t like change, Osborn said. A struggle ensued and Joan was punched by her son. She was found by her youngest son after dying from blunt-force trauma. Dale pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was given 25 years to life in prison.

Osborn didn’t recognize the signs of elder abuse at first, she said, but her understanding was changed when a friend, an expert in elder abuse, explained that her mother was mentally abused by her brother. “I missed the signs of elder abuse and I don’t want anyone else to miss them. I just don’t want anyone else to go through what we did.”

Today, Osborn is speaking and educating the community about elder abuse. During World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, she is working with the Department of Health and Human Services to get the word out across the state.

“No family should experience what Jodi and her family endured,” Pristow said. “That’s why it’s so important on World Elder Abuse Awareness Day for Nebraskans to learn how to recognize and report elder abuse and neglect. It’s everyone’s responsibility.”

With the number of people 65 or older growing to 20 percent of the U.S. population in the next 15 years, the need for greater awareness about elder abuse will continue to grow, Miller said. She urged Nebraskans to take time on June 15 to learn more about the signs of abuse and neglect.

The effects of elder abuse extend to family and friends who are left with feelings of guilt and ‘what-could-have-beens,’ Osborn said. It’s far better to call the hotline even when someone only suspects abuse than for the elderly to be obviously abused or neglected before notifying authorities.

# NEWS RELEASE

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Events will be held across the state as local Area Agencies on Aging and other organizations stage activities to promote World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, the Nebraska's Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline, local services and to point out signs of elder abuse, such as:

- Unexplained signs of injury such as bruises, welts, or scars, or broken bones, sprains, or dislocations.
- Bruises around breasts or genitals, or torn, stained, or bloody underclothing.
- Unusual weight loss, malnutrition, dehydration.
- Untreated physical problems, such as bed sores, and unsanitary living conditions like dirt, bugs, soiled bedding and clothes.
- Significant withdrawals from the elder's accounts, or sudden changes in the elder's financial condition.
- Items or cash missing from the senior's household.
- Problems with the care facility: poorly trained, poorly paid, or insufficient staff; crowding; inadequate responses to questions about care.
- Reports of drug overdose or apparent failure to take medication regularly (a prescription has more remaining than it should).

If abuse is suspected, call the Adult Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-652-1999. The call may be anonymous.