[Sample letter to the editor – long]

Dear Editor:

Wednesday, June 15, 2017 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. On that day, communities in the USA and all over the world will sponsor events to highlight the growing tragic issue of elder abuse. The [insert your organization name], is proud to host a [insert community event] to commemorate the day.

Your readers -- young and old -- should know that the U.S. Administration on Aging estimates that as many as 1 in 10 older Americans are abused or neglected each year. [Insert any state or local statistics you’d like here]. Older adults are vital, contributing members of American society and their abuse or neglect diminishes all of us. America has confronted and addressed the issues of child abuse and domestic violence, but, as a society we have for too long looked away from the issue of elder abuse.

Elder abuse can be financial, emotional, physical and sexual. It also includes people who are neglected and those who neglect themselves (self-neglect). **The consequences of elder abuse are grave: older adults who are abused are twice as likely to be hospitalized, four times as likely to go into nursing homes and three times as likely to die.** While studies show that most abusers are family members, trusted professionals may also target older adults. Abuse can happen in any setting: in the older adult’s own home, nursing homes, or assisted living facilities.

There are many ways to prevent elder abuse from occurring. Here are a few steps that you and others can take:

* Stop making fun of older adults (don’t tolerate ageism!);
* Educate yourself and others about the warning signs of abuse, neglect and self-neglect;
* If you see something, say something: if the older adult lives in the community, report your concerns to your local Adult Protective Services program or law enforcement, for residents of long-term care facilities, report to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman;
* Volunteer for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program in your state. Ombudsman programs work to resolve problems related to the health, safety, welfare and rights of persons who live in long-term care facilities (i.e., nursing homes, assisted living);
* Be a friendly visitor to an older person living in the community;
* Provide support for someone who is a caregiver;
* Raise public awareness: conduct presentations, distribute materials about elder abuse at senior centers, places of worship, physician offices, etc.
* Advocate for increased funding for elder abuse prevention and intervention programs.

Please urge your readers to get more information on how they can make a difference by visiting the website of the National Center on Elder Abuse <https://ncea.acl.gov> or by calling the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116. Thank you!

Sincerely,