



NEWS RELEASE

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California Elder Justice Workgroup Finds New Home at WISE & Healthy Aging

SANTA MONICA (July 4, 2011) - The California Elder Justice Workgroup (CEJW), created to help the legal, long-term care and protective service systems improve their ability to protect the rights, independence, security and well-being of vulnerable elders, has found a new home at WISE & Healthy Aging, according to an announcement by Grace Cheng Braun, President and CEO.

"We're truly delighted with our new home base. WISE & Healthy Aging's visionary leadership, versatile staff, and longstanding commitment to elder justice make it an incredible partner," said Workgroup Chair Lisa Nerenberg, MSW, MPH. "Our focus in the next few months will be to work together to build CEJW's organizational capacity and mobilize our network to meet the myriad challenges and opportunities we face today. We have so many talented, dedicated champions around the state whose voices need to be heard."

Cheng Braun noted that the CEJW's mission is an excellent fit with WISE & Healthy Aging's programs to prevent seniors from becoming victims of financial, physical or emotional abuse.

"We have been involved from the outset on the CEJW Steering Committee for this innovative statewide initiative," said Cheng Braun. "We are proud to provide a base for CEJW to continue its outreach to stakeholder groups throughout California to improve the quality and coordination of efforts to prevent elder abuse and neglect."

The CEJW is an outgrowth of the Archstone Foundation's Elder Abuse and Neglect Initiative. Since its launch in 2009, CEJW has:

- Produced ***Improving California's Response to Elder Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation***, a comprehensive blueprint. (This is available at the CEJW site.)
- Planned and organized a statewide summit of 92 Adult Protective Services (APS) workers, public guardians, judges, attorneys, victim advocates, researchers, educators, legislative staff, trainers, Ombudsmen, and other stakeholders to formulate recommendations for the future direction of services and policy.
- Presented at the From Financial Scams to Surveillance Cams: A Spotlight on Elder and Adult Abuse hearing sponsored by the Assembly Committee on Aging and Long-Term Care and the Assembly Committee on Public Safety.
- Represented the interests of elderly crime victims on Attorney General Kamala Harris' "Smart on Crime Work Group on Victims' Rights."

- Developed and piloted a model memorandum of understanding to improve consistency in responding to abuse reports across the state.
- Conducted a survey of law enforcement officials' elder abuse training needs.
- Explored discrepancies in how Adult Protective Services units across the state and nation define eligibility for protection. The CEJW's findings have been presented at state and national conferences to spark discussion about the need for greater clarity and consistency in responses.
- Developed the "Mental Health Service Needs of Vulnerable Elders: A Fact Sheet." to help advocates get access to Mental Health Services Act funds to support county mental health programs.

The CEJW's goals include:

- Promote coordination among state and local agencies
- Provide a voice for key stakeholders in state and federal policy development
- Promote greater uniformity in response across the state
- Advocate for state and federal policy that offers adequate protection
- Promote and facilitate the development of new services
- Promote research that informs policy and practice
- Build leadership and promote participation in elder justice advocacy
- Build alliances among stakeholders
- Serve as a trusted source of information to stakeholders

For more information about CEJW and its accomplishments and goals, visit the CEJW wiki site.

About WISE & Healthy Aging

WISE & Healthy Aging, a non-profit social services organization, enhances the independence, dignity and quality of life of older adults through leadership, advocacy and innovative services. It has been touching the lives of over 30,000 seniors annually for more than 40 years.

About Lisa Nerenberg, MSW, MPH

In addition to chairing the CEJW, Nerenberg has served as a consultant to a variety of organizations including the National Committee for the Prevention of Elder Abuse, the National Indian Council on Aging, the San Francisco Superior Court, the National Adult Protective Services Association, the Police Executive Research forum and the California Medical Training Center. She is the author of *Elder Abuse Prevention: Emerging Trends and Promising Strategies* (Spring, 2008) that describes what agencies, communities, tribes, states and national organizations can do to prevent abuse, treat its effects, and ensure justice. Additionally, she was the founding director of the San Francisco Consortium for Elder Abuse Prevention, which piloted the nation's first elder abuse multidisciplinary team and other widely replicated services, including a support group and shelter for elderly victims.