



## **2024 CO-AGE Priority**

### **Update the Georgia Code for Multidisciplinary Teams for Adult Abuse, Neglect, & Exploitation**

**The problem:** In 2018 legislation was passed to create another tool in the toolbox to combat elder abuse by allowing judicial districts in Georgia to create multidisciplinary teams to help address elder abuse and in the districts that have set up these teams, it has been a very effective tool. However, these teams are not mandatory so there is not a uniform response around the state to adult abuse exploitation and neglect. The code section is here:

<https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/2018/title-30/chapter-5/section-30-5-11/>

**What other states are doing for this issue:** Many states have multidisciplinary teams to help address elder mistreatment. Most cases of elder abuse, neglect and exploitation involve more than one kind of abuse and require interacting social services, legal, medical, psychological and law enforcement components for a response. Therefore, a multidisciplinary response serves older adults and their communities. These teams focus on complex cases of all types of abuse, neglect, exploitation, or self-neglect of elders, and adults with disabilities. These teams include APS, LTC Ombudsmen, law enforcement, non-profit CBO such as meals on wheels, care management organizations, realtors, legal teams, and more. The make-up varies by state and by local level need so that these teams meet the needs of the local community. For more information on other states response: <https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/mdt> shows the national support for these teams and team locators.

<https://www.justice.gov/elderjustice/file/960791/download> - this is 2022 statutory review that shows the states that have laws to create MDTs. Some of them are like Georgia and so it is a "may create" by statute and others are what we are proposing - "shall" create these teams.

**What legislation would do:** Updating the Adult Abuse Neglect & Exploitation Multidisciplinary Team Establishment Law would require all judicial districts to create multidisciplinary teams for coordination of local resources and response for adult abuse, neglect and exploitation. There is national toolkit and guide to help create these teams and there is the Forensic Special Initiatives Unit within the Department of Human Services that provides resources and assistance for the creation of these teams across the state. The infrastructure is there for these team models, we just need more judicial districts to take the steps to implement them to better protect our seniors. Here is additional information: <https://cjcc.georgia.gov/eligible-applicants-1/implementation-plan/multidisciplinary-teams>

**Helpful resources:** This issue was discussed with Georgia Gerontology Society (GGS) membership that attended a listening session and then voted on by the GGS Advocacy committee members and the GGS Board of Directors to submit this issue as a CO-AGE legislative priority.