

## Nursing Home Abuse— Knowing and Understanding

As our loved ones grow older we oftentimes take on greater tasks to ensure their health and well-being. This is a difficult undertaking and there are times when we must rely on a nursing home or assisted living facility to provide care. There are federal and state laws in place, which are intended to prevent nursing home neglect and abuse. Unfortunately nursing home abuse still occurs to this day, including physical, emotional and sexual abuse, broken bones, bed sores, malnutrition, dehydration and wrongful death.



Here is a brief look at each type of abuse:

**Emotional Abuse** – Humiliation or intimidation of another person by allowing another to feel worthless, e.g., kept in confined spaces. Berating another by telling them that they cannot perform simple tasks and or daily tasks. This type of abuse can diminish ones self-worth, allowing the elderly to feel depressed and non-existent.

**Physical Abuse** – Any intentional unwanted contact with the other person's body. This could result in pain, injury, or impairment. Battery or assault also falls into this category, but is not limited to bodily harm. Another form of physical abuse is restraints which are used to keep elderly in one position and which can cause bed sores and broken bones.

**Financial Abuse** – The improper use of ones funds without their consent or knowledge. This may impede ones ability to receive sufficient care, due to financial restraints. You must remember that financial abuse can have a great impact, and you should be aware of the financial state of your loved one.

With many different types of abuse it is imperative that family members, friends, and loved ones stay involved by making frequent visits and asking questions of care providers. Despite these efforts, neglect or abuse continues to occur.

### Our Practice Areas

Michael J. O'Connor & Associates is dedicated to providing clients with the best legal help possible.

- ☑ Workers' Compensation
- ☑ Social Security Disability
- ☑ Automobile Accidents
- ☑ Motorcycle Accidents
- ☑ Birth Injuries
- ☑ Premises Liability/Slip & Fall
- ☑ Product Liability
- ☑ Nursing Home Negligence
- ☑ Wills, Estates, & Elder Law
- ☑ Mesothelioma
- ☑ Dangerous Drugs
- ☑ Wage & Hour Violations

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# WELCOME

## New To Our Team—

The team at Michael J. O'Connor and Associates is proud to welcome the newest members of the firm, Mr. Steven O. Spahr and Ms. Beth A. Dodson. Both Ms. Dodson and Mr. Spahr have extensive knowledge of the legal system.



Attorney Steven O. Spahr earned his Juris Doctorate Degree from the Western New England College of Law, Springfield, MA.

Mr. Spahr obtained his undergraduate degree from University of Pittsburgh, in

Psychology and is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Supreme Court.

Mr. Spahr brings a diversified background to Michael J. O'Connor & Associates. Mr. Spahr worked as a Certified Vocational Expert for workers' compensation cases prior to entering law school.

In addition Mr. Spahr has extensive knowledge of claim management practices for workers' compensation. He has also lectured on various topics pertaining to workers' compensation practice in Pennsylvania.

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Attorney Beth A. Dodson earned her Juris Doctor degree from the prestigious Duquesne University School of Law, Pittsburgh, PA, where she graduated magna cum laude. While at Duquesne, she was a member of the Duquesne Law Review and wrote for Juris magazine.

Ms. Dodson obtained her undergraduate degree, magna cum laude, from Elizabethtown College, where she majored in Political Science with a concentration in Political Philosophy. Ms. Dodson was a member of Pi Sigma Alpha and the Elizabethtown Women's Varsity Volleyball team.

Ms. Dodson brings a diversified background to Michael J. O'Connor & Associates. Ms. Dodson has experience counseling and representing clients in a variety of civil matters in state and federal court, mediations, arbitrations, and before various governmental agencies. She has assisted clients with claims of employment discrimination, sexual harassment, breach of contract, negligence, retaliation, defamation, wrongful discharge, restrictive covenants, unemployment compensation, and other related employment claims. Additionally, she has experience defending clients in criminal actions in federal court.

Ms. Dodson is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, Carbon County Bar Association, and American Bar Association. She is admitted to practice in Pennsylvania and the United States District Courts for the Eastern and Western Districts of Pennsylvania.

Dodson is a Carbon County native who enjoys golfing, watching football, cooking, and playing the mandolin.

## Check Your Bike:

1. **Check the tires:** They are the most important parts of your bike. Check the surface of the tires, make sure there are no foreign objects in the tire and the pressure is sufficient.
2. **Make sure all controls are working:** Check cables are attached and look for kinking.
3. **Check Lights:** Make sure all lights are working, along with turn signals.
4. **Check Oil and Fuel:** Make sure there are sufficient oil, fuel, and lubricants.
5. **Side stand and Center stand:** Make sure each of these are properly in place and secured to the bike. If one of the springs is weak or broke remember to replace it.
6. **Breaks:** Before you go riding check your breaks.

## Motorcycle Safety

*More than half of all motorcycle fatalities involve another vehicle, and more often the motorist, not the motorcyclist, is at fault. Motorists should remember:*

- When changing lanes or turning at intersections, take an extra moment to look for motorcycles. Because of their small size, motorcycles can easily be hidden in a car's blind spots or by objects or backgrounds outside a car.
- Motorcyclists often must adjust position within a lane to be seen more easily, to avoid road debris, and to minimize the effects of passing vehicles and wind. Motorists should understand that these adjustments are done for a purpose and that the motorcyclist is not being reckless or showing off.
- Motorcyclists often slow down by downshifting or rolling off the throttle, thus not activating the brake light. At intersections, allow more following distance, about 3 to 4 seconds, in the event that a motorcyclist should slow down without visual warning.

*If a driver crashes into a motorcyclist, the driver would likely never forgive him- or herself. So when you see a motorcycle in motion, see more than the motorcycle: see the person under the helmet. He or she could be your friend, neighbor, or relative.*



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# Tips for Handling Workers' Compensation:

Unfortunately injuries happen daily. It's important that you know what the proper steps are in order to protect your interests and any possible claim you may have for workers' compensation. Here are a few helpful hints when dealing with workers' compensation:

**1<sup>st</sup>** - Many injured employees will ignore a serious injury; often times not reporting it to their employer for several days. This can result in many problems if you seek to file a claim. It is important that if you're hurt on the job you inform your employer the day in which it happened. Some insurance companies may try to deny or delay a valid claim due to the simple fact that the claimant did not inform them of an injury. Almost all companies have injury procedures in place and it is important to follow the procedures which are in place. This will help to insure that you receive everything which you deserve.

*“It is crucial that you seek medical attention immediately. Sometimes injured workers tend to put off meeting with a doctor...”*

**2<sup>nd</sup>** - When injured on the job, it is crucial that you seek medical attention immediately. Sometimes injured workers tend to put off meeting with a doctor. It is essential in the workers' compensation process that the injured employee seeks prompt medical attention. The worker should be guided by his or her supervisor through this process.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** - An insurance adjuster may contact the injured employee to determine if the claim is progressing properly. The adjuster may ask for a statement from the injured. It is imperative that you realize that any statement which you may give has implications to your claim. We suggest that you seek legal assistance immediately. Once the claimant has established a relationship with an attorney, the adjuster will no longer contact the person directly, but will speak directly with counsel.

**4<sup>th</sup>** - It is also very important that the injured follow all guidelines set by the doctor, such as only lifting a certain amount of weight or “light duty”. If the worker violates any of the set guidelines he or she may have a loss or reduction in benefits.

**5<sup>th</sup>** - The injured worker needs to follow the procedures outlined by both their employer and the insurance adjuster. Throughout the healing process, the injured workers will be monitored by their physician and the claims adjuster.





## SPOTLIGHT ON Attorney Debra A. Matherne

This issue the team of attorneys at Michael J. O'Connor and Associates would like to put Attorney Debra Matherne in the spotlight.

Matherne earned her Juris Doctor Degree from the prestigious Villanova University School of Law, Villanova, PA. Her undergraduate degree was obtained at Grove City College, Grove City in Psychology with an emphasis in English.

She is a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association, the Dauphin County Bar Association, and the American Bar Association.

Matherne brings a heavy emphasis on workers' compensation cases to Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, which has 14 locations throughout the Commonwealth. With over 18 years of experience, she is one of the top attorneys practicing in Workers' Compensation in the state of Pennsylvania.

Earlier in her career, Matherne worked for Michael J. O'Connor & Associates for eight years.

"We're very happy to have Attorney Matherne back. She is truly an advocate for injured workers," said Michael J. O'Connor.

Matherne lives in Mechanicsburg with her husband and three children.



## *What Our Clients are Saying...*

*At Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, we pride ourselves in the attention we pay to our clients. Here are just a few things that our clients are saying about us:*

*"So far so good. The reason you got my case is because you returned my call promptly. Staff was pleasant and knowledgeable."— Ruth W.*

*"A very good reputation for assistance with workers' comp. Attorney Kovalcik has been wonderful to us. He doesn't make you feel stupid when you ask questions — we like that. He is very caring. God Bless him!" — Joseph W.*

*At Michael J. O'Connor & Associates, we are ready to assist you in protecting the rights of your loved one. Call us at 1-800-518-4LAW.*

## HELPFUL TIPS

Fall is cold and flu season. Remember these everyday steps from [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) to protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

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