



## Child Abuse Awareness Month

Danielle Crowe, Officer

**“Every 8 minutes in Massachusetts a child is reported to have been either a victim of abuse or neglect” (MSPCC).**



April is the fourth month of the year and it is said that its rainy days will bring flowers for the month of May. April's birthstone is the diamond, which symbolizes innocence. Celebrating the innocence of childhood, April has become the Child Abuse Awareness month, in hopes that awareness and education will put an end to child abuse. Child abuse is any mistreatment or neglect of a child by a parent or guardian, that results in non-accidental harm or injury and which cannot

be reasonably explained. Child abuse can be categorized by any of the following: physical, emotional, sexual and neglect. Physical abuse is the form of non-accidental abuse which shows visible markings on a child's body. Emotional abuse has been defined as the systemic tearing down of another human being. Sexual abuse is the use of a child for sexual pleasure. Neglect is the most common form of child abuse that is reported. It has been defined, as the type of maltreatment that refers to the failure to provide needed age-appropriate care for a child.

As reported in the Boston Globe on Thursday, March 19, 2009, cases of shaken baby syndrome have been on the rise in Massachusetts in the last few months. Massachusetts child abuse specialists seem to think that this increase could be caused by the economic stress that is currently occurring in the country. The Boston Globe reported that child protection teams from Children's Hospital Boston and Massachusetts General Hospital have seen nine infants with shaken baby syndrome in the last three months; these results were compared to the four cases last year in the same time. Shaken baby syndrome is a form of child abuse that occurs when the abuser violently shakes an infant or small child uncontrollably. The child's neck muscles at this early stage are too weak to stabilize the child's neck, possibly leaving the child with a neurological injury. Dr. Alice Newton, medical director of the hospital's Child Protection Team, has stated that "the Children's Hospital team have seen an increase of late in the number of abuse cases and in their severity, and also in the number involving very young babies. In the last three months, there have been 16 cases of serious physical abuse, predominantly of babies under 3 months old, compared with the dozen cases last winter." Dr. Newton has no actual proof but she feels that the rise in child abuse is "a combination of the current economic situation and the deteriorating social infrastructure." Though families may be working abnormal and/or extra hours or have possibly lost their job leaving them at home more with their children, these actions still do not give them the right to take their frustration and anger out on their own or others children. There are programs and services that parents can get their

children involved in as well as themselves. There is also a hot-line that parents and/or others can contact to get help in times of need.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) provides many programs and services that are intended to assist families from all different types of cultures and backgrounds. They provide their services to families all throughout Massachusetts. The MSPCC has locations in Central MA, Metro Boston, Northeast MA, Southeast MA, Western MA and their corporate office in Boston. These various locations will give numerous amounts of families the opportunity to explore these different types of programs and services. The MSPCC has one “ultimate goal”, and that is their dedication “in protecting and promoting the rights and well-being of children and families.”

The Parental Stress Line also provides help for parents who are having a stressful time coping with several different things, including their children. Massachusetts provides a toll-free (800.638.8188), confidential and anonymous hotline that is accessible to parents, guardians, grandparents, relatives, and friends who may be concerned about a child’s safety and wellbeing. This hot-line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so that there is always someone on hand to be of assistance. As the Parental Stress Line says “No problem is too big or too small for a parent to call”.

People need to be aware and alert for signs of child abuse. If you notice any physical markings on a child’s body don’t be afraid to approach the child and ask them where the marks came from. You also need to remember that the abuse is not always going to be limited to just the child’s family members. The abuse can also be from outside the family, i.e. a friend, neighbor, teacher or stranger. Abusers come in all different shapes and sizes, so you can never judge a book by its cover. You must remember that there is always hope to help a child, to make a difference and to possibly stop the abuse before it even states.

**For more information visit any of the following websites:**

<http://www.mspcc.org>

<http://www.parentshelpingparents.org/>

<http://www.childabuse.org>

## **MGH Smoking Policy**

Please remember that MGH is a “No Smoking” environment. There is no smoking inside our facilities or outside our buildings. MGH has two designated smoking areas available to our employees, visitors, and patients. One booth is located on North Grove Street, adjacent to the main entrance. The second booth is located around the corner from the Jackson lobby, behind the shuttle bus stop. Please remember it is every employee’s responsibility to enforce this policy. Remind people they may not smoke in or near our facilities, that it is not healthy for our patients, visitors and staff and that we appreciate their compliance.



## FBI Fraud Updates

[www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)



The FBI continues to receive reports of individuals victimized while attempting to purchase vehicles via the Internet. Victims find attractively priced vehicles advertised at different Internet classified ad sites. Most of the scams include some type of third-party vehicle protection program to ensure a safe transaction. After receiving convincing e-mails from the phony vehicle protection program, the victims are directed to send either the full payment,

or a percentage of the payment, to the third-party agent via a wire payment service. No vehicles are delivered to the victims.

In a new twist, scammers are posing as members of the United States military. The fictitious military personnel in the scam have either been sent to a foreign country to improve military relations, or they need to sell a vehicle quickly and cheaply because of their upcoming deployment to either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Consumers are advised to do as much due diligence as possible before engaging in transactions to purchase vehicles advertised online. Consumers are also cautioned to be aware of the rules or warnings posted by the Internet sites they visit. If someone is asking you as a consumer to break or avoid the rules of the website, it is possible that person is trying to scam you.

If you have fallen victim to this type of scam, please notify the IC3 by filing a complaint at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov). Please let the Special Investigations Unit in Police and Security (6-1474) also know if you have a concern or are a victim.

## Weekend and Holiday Parking-What You Need to Know

Gavin Hussey, Parking Customer Service Coordinator

The MGH Parking Department would like to remind employees of parking availability at the hospital on weekends and holidays. Parking for employees who work on weekends and holidays is **free**. The free weekend parking in the three front garages starts at 5:30 pm Friday evening and ends at 9:30 am on Monday morning.

The city of Boston has granted us a waiver from the restriction that prohibits employee parking in the Yawkey garage. They now allow us to park employees in the Yawkey garage on weekends and holidays. In order to facilitate parking for patients and visitors near the main lobby and the Emergency Room the Parking department directs a majority of the weekend day shift employees to park in the Yawkey garage.

We ask all MGH staff not to park on the residential streets surrounding the hospital. There are areas of Charles Street and Blossom Street that are designated for ambulances, valet, or shuttle bus operations. These designations are in force twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Vehicles parked in these areas at any time are subject to parking tickets. Please avoid the risk of a ticket and utilize the free weekend parking in the front garages.



## Know How to Travel

Dick Chevrette, Senior Systems Advisor



As we head into the warmer months many of us will begin to plan our spring breaks, family vacations, and look for places to explore. As our travel plans start to fall into place, there are some key points to remember.

**Do your research.** Learn about planned stops and services available. Consider the level of health care that is available and what your own plan entitles you to. Ensure you have adequate health coverage abroad, including coverage of medical evacuation. Be aware that U.S. Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

**Medical advice:** Talk with your physician about activities planned and your general physical condition, any immunizations or medications that you may need. If you have a medical condition, carry a letter from your doctor, which describes your medical condition and any prescription medications you are taking. Ensure you bring enough medication to last the duration of your trip, including extra in case of lay-over or delays. Always carry your medications in a carry-on bag and they must be in their labeled package, not in a pill pack or other organizer.

**Immunizations:** You want to travel with appropriate documentation of your immunizations.

**Travel plans:** Carry your written itinerary and directions of where you wish to go. This will be useful in the chance you become lost. Make sure there is a contact person at home who is aware of your travel plans in detail. In the chance you become lost or delayed, that person can notify relevant individuals. Establish a system of how often to make contact with that individual.

**Student travelers:** Spring or summer break traveling should be a time to remember for the fun and adventure, however, when plans are not carefully made and thought out a trip can become a disaster and may impact the rest of their lives. One website to give particular consideration to is: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

**Senior travelers:** Be aware of the local conditions and what impact they may have on you. Be cautious of the level of physical activity as the changes in diet and climate can contribute to an adverse effect.

**Traveling with disabilities:** Each country has different restrictions relative to service dogs. Do your research with each country you plan to visit (<http://travel.state.gov>). If service dogs are permitted, learn about quarantine or vaccination requirements. If you have any equipment you travel with, ensure that all is in working order before you leave on your travels. You may want to research the availability of wheelchair and medical equipment providers in the areas you are going to visit.

We wish you happy travels!

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