

Site serves as unique resource for reporters of suspected child abuse

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Penn State College of Medicine, Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital and Penn State Law announced on June 23 a website that simplifies the process for reporting suspected child abuse cases in Pennsylvania.

The Look Out for [Child Abuse](http://pennstatehershey.org/childabuse) website, pennstatehershey.org/childabuse, provides an interactive, free, online program that guides users through the process of completing a CY-47 form – Pennsylvania's official form for reporting suspected abuse. Throughout the commonwealth, individuals whose professional work brings them into contact with children (teachers, health care providers, daycare workers, etc.) are mandated reporters, who before now have had to locate a CY-47 themselves and complete it by hand.

Look Out for Child Abuse now provides an online, statewide resource that is the first of its kind in the state: standardizing the language used to describe abuse, and helping users compose a detailed, easy-to-read report that can be printed and faxed to the appropriate county children and youth agency. To comply with federal privacy regulations, all personally identifiable data entered into this online program are erased as soon as the user exits the website.

“At Penn State, we recognize that the problem of child abuse is not simply a medical problem or a legal problem – it's an issue that affects children across our commonwealth, and we need to take creative, collaborative approaches if we're going to play a role in stopping abuse,” said Harold L. Paz, CEO of Penn State Milton S.

Hershey Medical Center, Penn State's senior vice president for health affairs, and dean, Penn State College of Medicine.

The Look Out for Child Abuse website was created through a joint effort involving the Department of Humanities at Penn State College of Medicine, Penn State Hershey Children's Hospital, and the Center on Children and the Law at Penn State Law.

"I applaud these collaborators at Penn State for launching another vital tool to help protect our children from the devastation of child abuse and neglect," said Michele Ridge, former Pennsylvania first lady and member of the Vision of Hope Advisory Council for the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape. "All of us must work together by joining the fight."

"We developed the site to help protect the most vulnerable members of our community from those who would hurt them," said Benjamin H. Levi, professor of pediatrics and humanities at Penn State College of Medicine. "We're proud to launch this as a one-stop resource for reporting suspected cases of abuse and learning more about this important issue."

In addition to the interactive CY-47 form, pennstatehershey.org/childabuse includes links to a variety of resources for victims, mandated reporters, and the general public. They include laws and statistics pertaining to child abuse as well as educational materials.

"Our goal was to produce a website for a variety of users ranging from secondary school students seeking information for term papers to medical professionals involved in the examination, treatment and research of child abuse and neglect," said Gary Shuey, social work supervisor at the Children's Advocacy Clinic at Penn State Law.

A video of the announcement of the Look Out for Child Abuse website is available at bit.ly/j4H8Lf

Cumberland County Children and Youth Services is part of a pilot project testing a version of the form that can be submitted electronically. If deemed successful, that functionality could eventually be made available statewide.

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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