

with mental incompetency.⁵⁷ Donald Poirier emphasized the need for lawyers to be aware that “they cannot act for two persons at the same time.”⁵⁸

Physicians and nurses were asked to reflect on ways that the health system could be made more responsive to older Canadians who are abused. They were asked to consider that the person accompanying an elderly person with bruises or breaks to emergency could be responsible for the injuries. During regular office visits, they were to learn ways to detect instances of physical and psychological abuse. They were cautioned to consider neglect when there was evidence of poor care. Interviews with the older person were to take place separately from the caregiver when abuse or neglect was suspected and training in how to listen effectively was seen as vital. Screening for a history of family violence was to be carried out. Checks for over-sedation or drug addiction were also deemed to be important. For suspected cases of abuse, physicians and nurses were to take a photograph or sketch bruises or injuries.

Concerning people who work in financial institutions, witnesses were strongly in favour of a more pro-active role. Bank workers were asked to monitor for sudden or different patterns of withdrawal activity in bank accounts of older Canadians. Bank personnel were reminded that: “Across this country it is very easy to get power of attorney, and it’s not well monitored.”⁵⁹ They were asked to assume greater responsibility for advising older clients about the power of attorney which is used when people are unable or unwilling to manage their legal and financial affairs and control is given over to a third party who then has duties toward the donor of the power. The banks were criticized for treating the forms for conferring power of attorney as “a very trivial matter rather than something that really has great consequences.” It was suggested that: “The bank tellers are handing these things out like cotton candy. They hand them out with no information being given or misinformation being given.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Wahl, 5:29.

⁵⁸ Poirier, 9:32.

⁵⁹ Scott, 1:15.

⁶⁰ Wahl, 5:29.