

Press Release June 2021: Florida Enacted a Statute on Eldercaring Coordination

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed [CS/HB 441](#) on June 4th, making Florida the first state in the nation to statutorily recognize an elder-focused dispute resolution process: eldercaring coordination. Senator Dennis Baxley (District 12) and Representative Brett Hage (House District 33) sponsored the Bill through the legislative process. The Bill won unanimous approval of all committees and subcommittees of reference and then on the floors of both Houses. Their understanding was clear: family conflict jeopardizes the health and well-being of elders.

Eldercaring coordination can protect older adults and help families avoid the costs, time, and heartache involved in court battles over the care and safety of older adults. Eldercaring coordination is a court-ordered dispute resolution process for aging persons and their families that promotes respect for the voice, autonomy and safety of older adults.

A highly qualified and trained eldercaring coordinator may be appointed by the court for a term of up to two years to assist with the transitions that families may experience in caring for their aging loved one. Sessions are scheduled according to the unique needs of each elder and family to help resolve non-legal issues, without the delays and lack of privacy experienced in court. Session frequency decreases as family members develop skills to more productively communicate and collaborate together with a focus on the elder's needs and preferences.

Ohio also made a commitment to eldercaring coordination through [Superintendence Rule 79](#) that went into effect in January 2019. On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2018, the United Nations recognized eldercaring coordination as an Awareness to Action Model for the protection of aging persons. This groundbreaking alternative dispute resolution process was created collaboratively through the commitment of Task Forces of 20 US/Canadian and 20 statewide entities overseen by the Association for Conflict Resolution and Florida Chapter of the Association of Family and Conciliation Courts in 2014.

The statute on eldercaring coordination in Florida, Section 44.407, went into effect on July 1, 2021.