

North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State

PRESS RELEASE

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Elaine F. Marshall
Secretary of State

Contact: Tim Crowley (919) 814-5340
Liz Proctor (919) 814-5341

North Carolina Fraud Fighters Sound the Alarm about Fraud Targeting Older Adults *New On-Demand “Scam Jam” and NC 2-1-1 will help people ID and report fraud*

RALEIGH – Some of the state’s top fraud watchdogs today warned North Carolinians about the pervasiveness of fraud and scams that are on the rise here and across the nation. This week much attention is being placed on financial abuse of elders as Americans mark World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.

To help people recognize and report fraud, representatives from the NC Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force are releasing a new 23-minute fraud prevention video and have made reporting crimes and finding help in North Carolina easier. The video is available on the NC Secretary of State’s YouTube channel at bit.ly/NCSCAMJAM24 or on [YouTube@AARPNC1](https://www.youtube.com/@AARPNC1).

NC Secretary of State Elaine Marshall explains, “When it comes to elder abuse, scams and fraud that threaten the financial security of our elders remains one of the worst forms of abuse. That is why we are stepping up our efforts to make it easier for older adults to spot, prevent and report fraud. The North Carolina Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force has added partners who will make both education about fraud prevention and reporting crimes easier.”

First Assistant US Attorney of the Eastern District of NC Dan Bubar said, “In spite of our best efforts, fraud and scams are on the rise. According to the FTC, Americans lost a record \$10 billion to fraud in 2023 with a median loss of \$500. Law enforcement often doesn’t have enough officers or field agents to go after every single instance of fraud — especially if only a few hundred dollars was stolen. Criminals know this and to keep their crimes under the radar screen, are tending to go after smaller amounts of money.”

The NC Department of Justice runs a no-scam hotline at 1-877-5-NO-SCAM where victims of fraud in North Carolina can report scams. “Scammers will pretend to be the government, law enforcement, even romantic partners or family members to try to trick people into giving up their money and financial information,” said Attorney General Josh Stein. “People have to be vigilant, verify before they talk to anyone, and be very hesitant to share information with people over the phone, email, text, or on social media.”

Another way older adults are targeted by fraudsters is through health care insurance and Medicare fraud. NC Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey said, “Who pays for insurance fraud? Ultimately, it’s the people who do so in the form of higher premiums and program costs. I encourage people to read their billing statements and if you see any suspicious charges, to report them.”

NC Senior Task Force members admit that reporting is often a challenge. Mike Olender, state director of AARP said, “We must change the way we talk to people who have been scammed since victims often feel like they weren’t smart enough to stay out of harm’s way. That makes them reluctant to report crimes. Fraud can trick anyone regardless of age or education.”

For many, finding help can be confusing since there are multiple agencies and 800 numbers for victims’ assistance and reporting. Moving forward, you can simply dial 2-1-1 and United Way operators can direct you to the appropriate place to find help. Additionally, the AARP Fraud Watch helpline has trained volunteers who can assist fraud victims, judgment free.”

To help build a stronger line of defense, the NC Senior Fraud Task Force also welcomed another new member, the NC Association on Aging (NCAOA), the organization that represents senior centers and senior service providers. This week and next, about 20 senior centers from across the state will be showing a new virtual scam jam helping viewers recognize and report today’s most pervasive fraud. The 25-minute program is available for public viewing on demand.

NCAOA President Thessia Everhardt, Senior Services Director at Davidson County Government said, “NCAOA will offer more fraud prevention programming like the Summer Scam Jam. “Senior Centers across North Carolina provide important programming to help people live their best lives. With the help of the NC Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force, more programs and information, like the new reporting directory, will be provided to facilities to help build a stronger line of defense.”

Representing the NC Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force at Wednesday's press conference were Secretary of State Elaine Marshall; Insurance Commissioner Michael Causey; First Assistant US Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Dan Bubar; Deputy Attorney General Jasmine McGhee; AARP North Carolina Director Michael Olender; and United Way of North Carolina President Brittany Pruitt Fletcher.

Helpful reporting resources:

[NC Attorney General’s Consumer Hotline](https://ncdoj.gov/protecting-consumers) <https://ncdoj.gov/protecting-consumers>
[Securities, Charities, and Mortgage Fraud Complaints](https://www.sosnc.gov/forms/by_title/Tip_And_Complaint)

[https://www.sosnc.gov/forms/by_title/ Tip And Complaint](https://www.sosnc.gov/forms/by_title/Tip_And_Complaint)

[North Carolina Senior Medicare Patrol](https://www.ncdoi.gov/how-can-we-help-you) File a complaint: <https://www.ncdoi.gov/how-can-we-help-you>

[AARP Fraud Watch Network](http://www.aarp.org/fraud) www.aarp.org/fraud

[NC 2-1-1](http://www.nc211.org) www.nc211.org

Established in 1998, the North Carolina Senior Consumer Fraud Task Force is a network of government agencies, business associations and non-profit organizations dedicated to spotting and stopping senior fraud in North Carolina.