



F R A U D A L E R T

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FRAUD ALERT – 3 TIPS SENIORS SHOULD KNOW TO AVOID BEING VICTIMIZED BY ECONOMIC RECOVERY PAYMENT SCAMMERS

SANTA MONICA (April 10, 2009) - According to an advisory issued by the Social Security Administration, there is concern that seniors and other eligible recipients of the \$250 Economic Recovery payments could become victims of a scam over the next several months.

"If you or someone you know is contacted by an individual or organization offering to complete the necessary paperwork to receive the payment, decline immediately and contact the fraud hotline at the Social Security Office of the Inspector General at 1-800-269-0271," says Petula Storey, director of WISE & Healthy Aging's Senior Fraud Prevention Call Center in Santa Monica. Phone lines are open between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Eastern time. More information is also available online at: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/oig/>.

According to Grace Cheng Braun, president and CEO of WISE & Healthy Aging, there are three important facts that all eligible SSA recipients should know in order to reduce the likelihood of being victimized:

1. The payment is automatic – you don't have to take any special action.
2. There are no requests to make, no applications to complete, no emails to respond to, no fees to pay, and no help is required to obtain the payment.
3. All special Social Security and SSI one-time recovery payments will be issued in May.

For more information on the WISE & Healthy Aging Senior Fraud Prevention Call Center, or to learn more about becoming a WISE & Healthy Aging Fraud Fighter volunteer, please call 310-394-9871 ext. 450.

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ABOUT THE WISE & HEALTHY AGING ELDER ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM

For the third consecutive year, WISE & Healthy Aging has been awarded a grant from the AARP Foundation. According to Grace Cheng Braun, president and CEO of WISE & Healthy Aging, the \$188,000 grant is to support the nonprofit social service agency's "WISE Senior Fraud Prevention Call Center" – one of only seven such programs in the entire country. "Fraud Fighter" volunteers completed more than 87,000 telephone calls to seniors in all parts of the country in 2008. This program, staffed by more than 20 volunteers, is a proactive telephone call center that reaches out to seniors nationwide – alerting them to scams and telemarketing frauds that target seniors and offering tips on how to avoid being victimized. Program volunteers are updated weekly on the most current scams.

ABOUT WISE & HEALTHY AGING

WISE & Healthy Aging, a Santa Monica social services organization, enhances the independence, dignity and quality of life of older adults through leadership, advocacy and innovative services. This nonprofit is the result of a Nov. 2007 merger of WISE Senior Services and Center for Healthy Aging.