



## F R A U D   A L E R T

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### **FRAUD ALERT – WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE? E-MAIL FRAUD SCHEME PURPORTEDLY ANNOUNCES A MILLIONAIRE CONTEST**

**SANTA MONICA (April 14, 2009)** - The Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) has been alerted to the circulation of a fraudulent e-mail, purportedly from *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, notifying recipients of their nomination for the "Oprah Millionaire Contest Show." To participate, recipients are asked to mail their contact information such as full name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address; however, no mailing address was provided. Verified contestants are then required to purchase airfare and a ticket to attend *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, as well as complete a forthcoming contest form containing personal questions. The contestants are then promised a seat for *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in April and asked to provide their responses to the personal questions for a chance to win a million dollars.

According to Petula Storey, director of WISE & Healthy Aging's Senior Fraud Prevention Call Center in Santa Monica, consumers should always be wary of unsolicited mail, phone calls or e-mails. "Definitely do not give anyone your bank account or other personal information," she says. "Providing such information can compromise your identity."

The IC3 advises consumers not to open unsolicited e-mails or click on any embedded links, as they may contain viruses or malware.

Individuals who receive such e-mails are encouraged to file a complaint at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

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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.