

PROTECT

OLDER AMERICANS FROM FINANCIAL EXPLOITATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACTS: Nancy Carr, 443-787-5382 or ncarr@arp.org
Helene Raynaud, CCCSMD, 443-514-0600 or hraynaud@cccsmd.org

Maryland Officials & Non-Profits Unite to Combat Elder Financial Abuse *PROTECT Week 2019 Launches June 10 in Harford Co., Continues at Venues Statewide Culminating in World Elder Abuse Awareness Day June 15*

BALTIMORE (June 10, 2019) -- One in five seniors over age 65 have been the victims of fraud, losing a staggering \$2.9 billion a year to identity thieves and con artists. Unfortunately, even more is lost to exploiters who are family, friends or caregivers. To assist Marylanders in identifying and combatting fraud, the Office of the Attorney General, Office of the Comptroller, AARP Maryland, CCCSMD (Consumer Credit Counseling Service of Maryland), the Maryland Department of Aging, the Commissioner of Financial Regulation from the Maryland Department of Labor, and other consumer protection groups are launching a statewide public awareness campaign during PROTECT Week (**Protecting Older Americans from Financial Exploitation**), **June 10 – 15, 2019**.

PROTECT Week events include anti-fraud workshops and opportunities to shred sensitive documents to keep them out of the hands of identity thieves, starting on June 10 in Harford County. There will be a press conference at Atrium Village in Owings Mills on Tuesday, June 11 at 10:30 AM, and additional events in Howard, Baltimore, Prince George's and Garrett Counties through the week (the full schedule is online at www.protectweek.org).

On Friday, June 14, AARP will host a telephone town hall with Attorney General Brian Frosh, Comptroller Peter Franchot, Commissioner of Financial Regulation Antonio Salazar, Office of Adult Services Director Dorinda Adams and CCCSMD President Helene Raynaud, where callers can learn how to identify, prevent and report fraud.

In Maryland, more than 54,000 cases of fraud were reported in 2018, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), with losses totaling more than \$18 million. An increasingly common scheme is the "grandparent" scam, where callers pretend the victim's relative is in jail and needs bail money wired. Other popular cons include "lottery scams," where victims are persuaded that they have won a contest and have to send money upfront to pay the taxes before receiving their winnings, and "tech support" scams, where callers seek to gain access to the victim's personal computer.

"One of my office's highest priorities is protecting seniors and vulnerable adults from financial abuse by way of deception, intimidation, or undue influence," said Attorney General Frosh. "Sadly, these abuses can be perpetrated by close 'friends and family' as well as complete strangers. Our office has a dedicated Consumer Protection Division, and we encourage you to

contact us at 410-528-8662 if you have questions about financial exploitation, think you or a loved one may have been a victim, or need guidance navigating a number of other consumer issues.”

“Financial criminals will stop at nothing to steal money from their potential victims,” said Comptroller Peter Franchot. “No matter how careful you are with your personal information and financial records, you can never be too vigilant because these scammers will use every trick in the book to get their hands on your hard-earned money. Don’t let them win.”

“Community education and public awareness campaigns like PROTECT Week are key to preventing elder financial abuse,” said Helene Raynaud, president of CCSMD. “Scams and fraudulent activities targeting seniors are growing rapidly and are constantly evolving. Elder financial abuse is unfortunately often referred to as the Crime of the 21st Century, because boomers (and their parents) are entering their late years with significant assets and great wealth overall. We have a collective responsibility – as educators, regulators, financial professionals, consumer advocates and friends – to tackle this critical issue with a real sense of urgency and be as proactive as possible. We hope this campaign will provide much needed resources and tools to the communities we serve.”

“Marylanders are losing millions of dollars to scams and fraud every year, and every day criminals become more sophisticated in how they separate you from your hard-earned money,” said AARP State President Hank Greenberg. “Collaboration among government agencies, law enforcement, social workers, banks and community agencies is essential to prevent financial exploitation, and that is why PROTECT Week is so important. I encourage everyone to take advantage of the free events we are hosting this week to learn more about fraud and to take the opportunity to shred their sensitive documents.”

ALL PROTECT Week events are free and open to the public, but registration is required. Details are available at www.protectweek.org.

Harford County Shred and Kickoff Event

June 10, 10:00 am to 3:00 pm
Jarrettsville Library
3722 Norrisville Rd., Jarrettsville, MD 21084

Baltimore County Shred

Date: June 13, 2019, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
Location: Perry Hall Library
9685 Honeygo Blvd, Perry Hall, MD 21128

Garrett County Shred

Date: June 14, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Location: Grantsville Senior Center
125 Durst Ct., Grantsville, MD 21536

Howard County Workshops & Shred

Date: June 15, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Location: Howard County Office on
Aging and Independence
9830 Patuxent Woods Dr., Columbia, MD 21046

Prince George's County Shred & CarFit

Date: June 14, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
Location: St. Paul Church
6419 Marlboro Pike, District Heights, MD 20747

Fraud Telephone Town Hall with Guest Experts

Date: June 14, 10:00 am to 11:00 am

Discussions Targeting Elder Abuse and Safety

Date: June 14, 9:00 am to 1:30 pm
Location: Randallstown Library
8604 Liberty Rd., Randallstown, Maryland 21133

Bonus: Berlin Shred

Date: June 29, 9:00 am to 1:00 pm
Location: Worcester County Library
11107 Cathell Rd., Berlin, MD 21811

About AARP

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With a nationwide presence and nearly 38 million members, AARP strengthens communities and advocates for what matters most to families: health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment. AARP also produces the nation's largest circulation publications: AARP The Magazine and AARP Bulletin. To learn more, visit www.aarp.org or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

About CCCSMD

CCCSMD is a fully-accredited nonprofit housing and credit counseling agency. Since 1966, we have provided group education and individual financial and housing counseling to hundreds of thousands of Marylanders. CCCSMD is a HUD-approved National Intermediary, accredited by the Council On Accreditation (COA), licensed by DLLR and a member of the National Foundation for Credit Counseling (NFCC). Each year, we serve over 5,000 individuals and families.