



Connecting Older Adults with Community-based Resources and Options

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Don't Get Tricked: Protect Yourself From Fraud!

Every year, American consumers lose billions of dollars to health care fraud, identity theft and other fraud-related crimes. To help older adults understand how to protect themselves from fraud, AgeOptions, the Illinois Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) Program and the Stickney Township Office on Aging will host a Fraud Prevention Fair at the Louis S. Viverito Senior Center, 7745 S. Leamington Avenue, Burbank, on Friday, October 14, from 10 am to 1 pm.

The theme of the fair, in time for Halloween, is "Don't Get Tricked: Protect Yourself from Fraud!" Attendees will receive information and materials from a number of experts in fraud prevention, including representatives of the Illinois Attorney General's Office, the Cook County Sheriff's Office, the Burbank Police Department, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General (OIG), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Federal Trade Commission, the Legal Assistance Foundation of Metropolitan Chicago and the Illinois Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP).

The fair will feature Lina Choudhry Rashid, External Outreach Specialist at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Regional Office in Chicago, who will discuss the ways that the Affordable Care Act is helping fight Medicare and Medicaid fraud.

"When criminals steal from Medicare and Medicaid, they are stealing from all of us, and that's why fighting Medicare and Medicaid fraud is one of the Obama Administration's top priorities, said Dr. James Galloway, acting regional director at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Region V.

"Thanks to the new tools in the Affordable Care Act we are more prepared than ever to safeguard taxpayer dollars and ensure that the health coverage of our seniors, families, and children is secure. For example, we recovered \$4 billion in criminal actions related to our joint health care fraud enforcement activities in 2010 alone," Galloway said. "Empowering consumers to prevent and detect health care fraud is essential in preserving the integrity of the Medicare and Medicaid programs."

Fair activities will include:

- Fraud BINGO, with prizes such as personal shredders for destroying important documents
- Shredding stations where attendees may drop off documents to be securely shredded and disposed of
- Senior Medicare Patrol volunteers to help consumers read and understand their Medicare Summary Notices or Explanations of Benefits from their health insurance plans
- Informational tables staffed by representatives from each of the fraud protection agencies mentioned above
- Refreshments

For more information or to register, please contact the Stickney Township Office on Aging at (708)636-8850.

AgeOptions and its network of community agencies are the principal source of information regarding senior services in suburban Cook County, Ill. A nonprofit organization located in Oak Park, AgeOptions has served the older adults of suburban Cook County and their caregivers as an Area Agency on Aging since 1974. For more information, please visit the Agency website at www.ageoptions.org.

AgeOptions connects adults age 60 and over with resources and service options so they can live their lives to the fullest and remain in their homes as long as possible. In 2010 we met the needs of more than 198,500 individuals in 130 communities within 30 townships that have a diverse population of 460,000 older adults. AgeOptions advocates, plans, develops and funds programs and coordinates a network of community-based senior service agencies to ensure an effective and efficient system of service delivery. Support is provided through the Older Americans Act, Illinois General Revenue Funds, local funds and individual contributions.