



Seniors Don't Have to Fight Fraud Alone

Release Date: June 11, 2018

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MADISON – June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) would like to raise awareness of one of the primary ways that seniors are abused: financial fraud. As a recent example, a Federal Trade Commission report noted that consumers between the ages of 70-79 who fell for scams last year had a median loss of more than \$600, and consumers aged 80 and over lost nearly \$1,100 – more than 2.5 times more money than victims in their twenties (\$400 loss).

“Numerous scams target seniors at a higher rate than the general public, so DATCP makes an extra effort to inform seniors about the warning signs of a scam,” said Michelle Reinen, Director of the Bureau of Consumer Protection. “Our best tool to aid in the fight against scams is education, and we implore consumers to share their knowledge of fraud risks with older friends and relatives.”

DATCP is the state’s primary consumer protection agency and has authority to regulate unfair business practices. The Consumer Protection Hotline (800-422-7128, datcp hotline@wi.gov) helps to provide answers to consumer questions and the Bureau of Consumer Protection mediates consumer complaints. The Bureau also monitors all complaints for trends and patterns of behavior that require further investigation to enforce state laws, especially those complaints involving seniors.

One of DATCP’s key educational resources addresses financial elder abuse head on. DATCP’s Senior Guide is a 50+ page booklet that helps older adults identify scams and work through difficult consumer issues. The guide is available as a free download on the DATCP website (datcp.wi.gov) or a printed copy can be requested by contacting the Consumer Protection Hotline.

If you are an older consumer (or the loved one of a senior) who has been targeted or victimized by a scammer or who is facing a difficult consumer matter, DATCP is here to lend a hand:

- Contact DATCP’s Consumer Protection Hotline to speak with a staff member about your concerns. They can offer guidance and help find resources on your issue.
- File a complaint with DATCP. We can try to help mediate the issue. You can file a complaint online on the DATCP website. If you would like to file your complaint by mail, you can download a complaint form from the DATCP website or call the Consumer Protection Hotline and request a complaint form by mail.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wi.gov or contact the Consumer Protection Hotline.

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