

Greetings fellow York Countians,
This is a Fraud Alert issued by the York County Elder Abuse Task Force. Every other week, experts from the York County District Attorney's office who prosecute these devastating financial crimes will offer warnings about the latest financial scams targeting seniors here in York County. Educating seniors about financial fraud is a top priority of the York County Elder Abuse Task Force. With that in mind, we want every senior in York County to remember the **3 R's**. **R**ecognize a potential scam; **R**efuse to make any hasty decisions and **R**eport suspicious activity to police. Stay safe and feel free to contact me with any questions at:

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FRAUD ALERT! – Sweetheart Scams

Be aware of “sweetheart scams.” They are targeting our elderly population. Typically in these scams, a scammer is on social media or on a dating website posing as a person looking for a relationship online. Through chatting over the internet, exchanging phone numbers, and in some cases meeting in person, the scammer develops a relationship with the victim. The scammer will send a photo of a good looking woman or man and eventually profess their “love.” The scammer then explains a predicament they are in: they have lost their passport and can’t get home unless someone gives the embassy money to process their new one, they are on a trip and their suitcase was stolen, they need an operation, or something similar. The victim, who believes he/she is in love with the unsuspecting scammer, feels the need to help their new found love by wiring or sending money over and over again. The scam usually continues until the money is gone and then the “sweetheart” leaves the victim.

How to Avoid Sweetheart Scams:

- Never transfer or wire money to anyone, especially if you’re communicating with a stranger whom you’ve never met in person.
- Pursue relationships face-to-face. Avoid online dating if possible.
- Be aware of your environment and be realistic. Ask yourself: Does the scenario that is being explained to you seem realistic or are your emotions taking over?
- Do your homework. Do research to find additional information about new individuals you meet online. Many scammers do not present themselves to be who they actually are.
- Realize that it is okay to say “no.” It is not impolite and is the best defense towards protecting your assets.

What to do if you believe you have encountered a scammer:

- Report the scam to local law enforcement as soon as possible.
- Cease all communications with the scammer.
- File a complaint with the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov