



For Immediate Release
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Contact: Robyn Ziegler
312-814-3118
877-844-5461 (TTY)
rziegler@atg.state.il.us

Contact: Jessica Woodward (IDoA)
312-814-8194
877-844-5461 (TTY)
jessica.woodward@illinois.gov

*******CONSUMER ALERT*****CONSUMER ALERT*******

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN AND DEPARTMENT ON AGING
CAUTION SENIORS ABOUT ATTEMPT TO CHARGE FOR FREE
EMERGENCY DEVICE**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan and Director of the Illinois Department on Aging Charles D. Johnson today warned that some senior citizens have received phone calls asking for payment for an emergency home response device which is provided to qualified individuals free of charge.

Officials from the Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA) notified Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau of a recent incident in which a client of the Department's Community Care Program in Jacksonville reported that a man identifying himself as "Luke Grant" called from what appeared on Caller ID to be an Arizona phone exchange. He asked the person for a credit card number to charge \$399.97 for what he termed was a "hook-up fee" for the emergency home device.

IDoA officials stress that the devices are provided **free** to clients through the department's Community Care Program.

"Unfortunately, far too many scam artists try to target seniors. The good news here is that this quick-thinking senior did not fall for this scam and was even able to jot down a phone number that may help in locating the perpetrator," Madigan said.

"It's a sad commentary on our society that as we try to help older adults live their final years in dignity that some see it as an opportunity to enrich themselves," said IDoA Director Johnson. "We want all our seniors to use common sense and not give out personal information over the phone when they don't know who's calling."

Calls like the one involved in this scam are fraudulent attempts to obtain personal information that could be used to financially exploit senior citizens.

"This incident should serve as a reminder to all citizens, of any age, to never divulge personal financial information over the phone," Madigan noted.

Madigan's Consumer Fraud Bureau and the IDoA noted that the best way for all consumers to avoid fraud is to ignore unsolicited requests and report them to family or other trusted individuals, local and area law enforcement and social service agencies.

Consumers also can visit Madigan's Web site for more consumer protection information and can download a consumer complaint form at www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov or by calling the Consumer Fraud Hotlines:

Chicago: 1-800-386-5438 and 1-800-964-3013 (TTY)
Springfield: 1-800-243-0618 and 1-877-844-5461 (TTY)
Carbondale: 1-800-243-0607 and 1-877-675-9339 (TTY)
Spanish-language hotline: 1-866-310-8398

The Department on Aging's Community Care Program is designed to assist seniors to maintain their independence and provides cost effective alternatives to nursing home placement. The Emergency Home Response Service (EHRS) provides senior citizens with two-way voice pagers automatically linking them to a support center that can quickly send help in case of an emergency. EHRS allows those seniors in need of some assistance to continue to live independently while remaining safe.

More information on qualifications for the Community Care Program can be obtained by calling the Illinois Department on Aging's Senior HelpLine at 1-800-252-8966 (888-206-1327 TTY).

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