

**Date: April 10, 2017**

Contact: Honorable Kirk Kashian  
Branch County Probate Court  
517-279-4318

Laura Sutter, Coordinator  
Area Agency on Aging 3C  
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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **“DON'T LET FRAUDSTERS PUT *YOUR MONEY* ON THE LINE!”**

... A FREE community awareness event addressing fraud and scam prevention

#### **(Coldwater, MI)**

Imposter scam complaints surpassed identity theft for the first time as the second most common category of consumer complaints received by the Federal Trade Commission's Consumer Sentinel Network in 2016, according to the agency's new Data Book. The Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Consumer Sentinel Network tracks complaints received by the FTC and it includes complaints made directly by consumers, complaints received by state and federal law enforcement agencies, national consumer protection organizations and non-governmental organizations. The rise in impostor scam reports is due to an increase in complaints about government imposters. Imposter scams come in many varieties, but work the same way: a scammer pretends to be someone trustworthy, such as a government official or computer technician to convince a consumer to send money.

Imposter scams are on the rise in Branch County! Local officials have received a noticeable increase in the number of reports from concerned citizens who've been contacted by the "IRS", "Medicare" and "Social Security". Branch County Probate Court Judge, Kirk Kashian, warns community members "These entities will never try to call you at home. They will never ask you to provide a bank account number or wire them money. Once you've provided this information it is nearly impossible to track down these criminals and bring them to justice."

What can you do to protect yourself? Here are three tips:

1. Do not provide personal information over the phone including social security number, date of birth, credit card information, or bank account information.

2. Do not verify your name or any other personal information when speaking on the phone to unknown individuals.
3. Be informed by attending the Branch County Elder Abuse Prevention Coalition’s *free community awareness event*.

**“Don’t Let Fraudsters put *Your Money* on the Line!”**

**Wednesday, April 19, 2017**

**1:00pm – 3:30pm**

**CHC Conference Center, 370 E. Chicago Rd., Coldwater**

*Refreshments provided by Maple Lawn Medical Care Facility*

*Door Prizes! (must be present to win)*

At this event our dedicated local law enforcement agencies and the Michigan Attorney General’s Office Consumer Education Division will address current scam and fraud activity including phone, mail, and E-scams (scams via electronic mail). You are invited to join us to learn, understand and prevent these crimes from happening to you and those you care about!

For additional details or to become involved in the Elder Abuse Prevention Coalition local efforts, please contact Laura Sutter at the Area Agency on Aging 3C at (517) 278-2538 or via email at [sutterl@bhsj.org](mailto:sutterl@bhsj.org) .

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The Branch County Elder Abuse Prevention Coalition is dedicated to preventing abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults through community education and advocacy. The Coalition members volunteer their time and talents to carry out the collaborative mission, members include: Sheriff’s Department, Coldwater Public Safety, Michigan State Police, Probate Court, Department of Health & Human Services, Prosecutor’s Office, Community Health Center, Pines Behavioral Health, Branch County Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Commission on Aging, BlueOx Credit Union, Century Bank and Trust, Chemical Bank, Southern Michigan Bank & Trust, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Maple Lawn Medical Care Facility, and the Area Agency on Aging 3C.