



SNOHOMISH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Pride in Service to Our Community

R. R. "Rick" Bart
Sheriff

Dear Family Caregivers in Snohomish County:

You may be asking yourself- what is a letter from our Sheriff doing in a family caregiver's kit?

Many persons served under the new Family Caregiver's Support Programs of Snohomish County will be older in age. This group interests me from a law enforcement perspective because our older citizens are primary targets for con artists and white-collar crime. The reason? Generally older citizens have more resources, savings, pensions, Social Security and a lifetime of cash, valuable collectibles and treasures. They may be feeling ill or vulnerable. They may also be isolated and lonely for company.

Telemarketing fraud is a \$40 billion dollar crime. Over sixty percent of their victims are older. If you add to this \$40 billion the dollars lost to mail and door-to-door sales fraud, the figure is much, much higher. Con artists are thieves. They want your money or easy access to your valuables, assets, and even your identity.

I am hoping this short letter and resource information card will help you protect yourself and your loved ones from these criminals.

Con artists use three primary ways to contact their victims: by phone, mail or door-to-door sales. As soon as the con artist gains the listener's confidence, through a clever "pitch", the real feeding frenzy begins. The victim's name is put on a "mooch" list. These lists are sold to other criminals, and in a short period of time, the victim is bombarded by other con artist's calls. Some seniors get more than 20 calls a day from shady telemarketing companies, while others can hardly find their real mail amidst all of the sweepstakes entries.

With billions of dollars at stake, con artists are relentless. I heard of one "mooch" list that targeted Alzheimer's patients and others with dementia-related disorders. Specific to this example, the family discovered that their loved ones lost over \$100,000 with the hopes of becoming the next lucky sweepstakes winner. They became aware of the problem only when a concerned neighbor reported that a large number of packages and couriers were arriving at the home. Family caregivers- wives, husbands, sons, daughters, relatives, and friends- are special members of our community. By familiarizing yourselves with con artist's tactics and schemes, you will be better able to protect your loved ones and yourself from financial and personal losses.


ROBERT R. BART
Snohomish County Sheriff

Attachment