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MEDIA ALERT

Consumer Protection warns Seniors to be on alert for fake telemarketing calls which threaten to cancel their Medicaid/Medicare coverage and Social Security payments

"Scam artists claim to be from fake government agency and try to bully victims into giving bank account information over the phone"

(For immediate release)

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Francine A. Giani, Executive Director of the Utah Department of Commerce announced today that Utah citizens need to be on the alert for fraudsters who are targeting seniors over the phone with a new telemarketing scam where victims are told that unless they give their bank account information to a representative with the "National Medical Department", they will cancel the seniors' Medicaid/Medicare coverage immediately. The fraudsters also threaten that they will cut off the citizen's Social Security payments unless they comply with their demands for bank account information. One Utah woman intercepted a call to her 92-year old mother who was told by the caller that he had her address, phone number and birth date but was calling to get her bank information. The woman refused to give out her information and reported the call immediately to the Division of Consumer Protection. Citizens are urged to contact their relatives, neighbors and friends to warn them of this new telemarketing scam.

"The tough economy has made fraudsters more aggressive in preying on the fears of Utah seniors and others over the phone," said Francine A. Giani, "Please remind your loved ones that there is no National Medical Department and no government agency would make calls demanding bank account information over the phone."

For more information on how to protect yourself from consumer scams and fraud, log on to www.consumerprotection.utah.gov. If you have a question about a possible scam or consumer complaint, contact the Division of Consumer Protection at (801) 530-6601.

For more information contact:

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