

James G. Clynes
Chairman

Latha Thompson
District Manager



505 Park Avenue
Suite 620
New York, N.Y. 10022
(212) 758-4340
(212) 758-4616 (Fax)
info@cb8m.com- E-Mail
www.cb8m.com – Website

The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 8

Public Safety & Health, Seniors & Social Services
Joint Committee Meeting

Lenox Hill Hospital
130 East 77th Street
Michael Bruno Presentation Room
Thursday, January 21, 2016
6:30pm

Board Members Present: Debra Teitelbaum, Jackie Ludorf, Hattie Quarnstrom, David Rosenstein, Barbara Rudder

Public Member Present: Jeffrey Ascherman

Catherine Christian, Chief of the Elder Abuse Unit at The New York County District Attorney's Office gave a presentation on scams that are targeting seniors in the upper-east-side community.

Ms. Christian explained that it is important for the DA's office to hear concerns about scams and raise public awareness on crime prevention. The Elder Abuse Unit works with anyone who is 60 years of age and older who has been a victim of a crime. The Elder Abuse Unit helps protect senior citizens from crimes of physical abuse, domestic violence, financial exploitation and neglect. The Elder Abuse Unit deals only with crimes, not civil legal services.

The Unit deals with people aged 60 years and older because at age 60, a person's pension kicks in. Seniors are targets because it is perceived that they have money and are cognitively easier prey. Studies have shown that a person's financial skills peak at age 53, so aging makes you vulnerable to a financial crime. Majority of crimes are usually done by someone the victim knows, who is aware of the victim's finances.

Scams are perpetrated by strangers. There are three main scams on the Upper East Side.

#1 Lottery Scam. Scammers are friendly and prey on the fact that you would be curious as to their offer. You will hear, "All you have to do is send money, then we can send winnings." These scams are sometimes called Jamaican wiring scams. If scammer is found guilty, you can get restitution against them. If you hear, "You've won...wire money...", hang up. Wiring cannot be traced.

#2 Grandparent Scam: This involves a phone call stating a family member is being held hostage or has been arrested and needs money as soon as possible. Often the person calls pretending to be a grandchild needing money. Social media is seen by scammers who use that information on the call. Never give any credit card or financial information if someone calls you. Even if charities you support call you, go online to donate.

#3 IRA Scam: Special Agent "Frank" calls and tells you, "You have debt, but you can clear this up by paying now." Keep in mind that the IRS never calls. Another example is someone calling and offering a reverse mortgage. A reverse mortgage should be an informed decision with you initiating the call. You should never be solicited. Go on your own to seek independent advice. Be careful with anyone who offers you financial advice who you have not approached first.

Additional information:

A misdemeanor assault becomes a felony when someone over 65 years old gets hit by someone 10 years younger than the victim.

Don't assume that because someone is older that they are cognitively impaired.

If you get a credit card fraud call, hang up and call the number on your credit card.

Phone lists are sold and known as "sucker lists." Do not engage in phone conversation with strangers.

Any unsolicited phone call requesting money, personal/financial information, donations or debt repayment may be a scam. Hang up if you receive this type of call. If you have been a victim of a scam, call the Manhattan DA's office's Elder Abuse Hotline: 212-335-9007. Dial 911 if there is an emergency.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Debbie Teitelbaum and Nick Viest, Co-Chairs, Public Safety Committee
David Liston and Jacqueline Ludorf, Co-Chairs, Health, Seniors & Social Services Committee