

Better Business Bureau Warns Against Unethical Services Targeting the Elderly

The Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Eastern North Carolina advises seniors to be aware of scams that may result in significant financial losses.

Oct. 31, 2007 - [PRLog](#) -- RALEIGH, N.C. --The Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Eastern North Carolina advises seniors to be aware of scams that may result in significant financial losses. Several companies claim to provide legitimate services to seniors, but do not deliver on their promises.

Highlighted in the BBB Consumer Alerts, Consumer Benefit Group, an Arizona-based company, is calling seniors and stating their personal information was found on various mailing lists. Complaints allege the company uses high pressure to sell a \$300 membership program that will eliminate their information from being distributed. After enrolling in the program, seniors report unauthorized charges, customer service issues and difficulties obtaining refunds.

“Unfortunately, seniors are often targets for scam artists, as they tend to be deeply concerned with maintaining finances to last them throughout their lives,” says Beverly Baskin, president and CEO of the BBB of Eastern N.C. “To avoid falling prey to scams, seniors should always check with the BBB before entering into any agreements.”

In another case, Express Scripts targets seniors through mail-order prescriptions. Consumers have filed over 170 complaints about the company’s late delivery, improper billing, lost orders and incorrect prescriptions.

For more information on how to protect seniors, visit bbb.org.

About the BBB of Eastern North Carolina:

The Better Business Bureau of Eastern North Carolina is a 501 (c)(6) not-for-profit corporation serving 33 counties in Eastern North Carolina. The organization is funded primarily by membership dues from more than 3,200 local business and professional firms. The BBB promotes integrity, consumer confidence and business ethics through business self-regulation in the local marketplace. Services provided by the BBB include, reports on companies and charitable organizations, general monitoring of advertising in the marketplace, dispute resolution services, and consumer/business education programs. All services are provided at no cost to the public, with the occasional exception of mediation and arbitration. Visit bbb.org.

CONSUMER ALERTS FOR OCTOBER 2007

In an effort to keep the media and public informed, the Better Business Bureau of Eastern North Carolina offers monthly BBB Consumer Alerts as potential story or interview ideas. Readers should take into consideration the importance of the practice in question and the total performance of a company. This list is current as of release date. Information regarding business or consumer topics reported here can be obtained through the BBB office by contacting info@raleigh.bbb.org.

BBB Kicks It Up a Notch – BBB changes longstanding business “member” status to “BBB Accredited Business.” BBB Accredited Businesses agree to abide by “BBB Standards for Trust,” which means they will advertise honestly, tell the truth, be transparent, honor promises and be responsive. Consumers will find the new BBB web site (bbb.org) much more informative and user friendly. The new “BBB Insiders’ Guides” book series is being released this month. The first three are “Starting an eBay Business,” “Buying a Franchise,” and “Buying a Home.” The “BBB Consumer Trust Index,” sponsored by Gallup and VISA, will be released later this year. The new BBB rating system will be coming next year. It’s a brand new

world at the BBB! Start your search with the BBB. Start With Trust!

E-mail Discount Network claims to offer an e-mail account service. One consumer is concerned that his name was sold to this company, who then put a monthly \$12.95 charge on his phone bill. The Florida Attorney General's office is investigating this company for "cramming," a practice where a company bills for services without authorization, hoping the consumer won't notice the extra charge and pay the entire bill. Consumers are advised to examine their phone bills carefully and challenge any extra charges with the company. If that doesn't work, contact the BBB.

Senior Alert – Consumer Benefit Group is calling seniors, telling them their personal information has been found on various mailing lists. Consumers allege the company uses high pressure to sell a membership program (around \$300) that will eliminate their personal info from being distributed. Complaints involve unauthorized charges, customer service issues and difficulty in obtaining refunds. This Arizona company has an unsatisfactory rating.

Express Scripts fills mail-order prescriptions. Consumers have complained about late delivery, improper billing, lost orders, and incorrect prescriptions being sent. Over 170 complaints have been filed against this Saint Louis company and they have an unsatisfactory rating.

Automotive Advantage is calling consumers and telling them that, because they used their VISA card at a participating retailer, they have won a gift card, which can be used for gas, oil changes and repairs. The caller just needs to verify the consumer's VISA information to make sure they are the winner. We don't think so! An identity thief is making the calls from a cell phone. If you have received similar calls, please call the BBB at 919-277-4222.

Shipping 4 U offers a business opportunity for consumers to do secret shopping for major companies. These companies include GAP, Western Union, UPS, Best Buy, Old Navy, Wal-Mart and McDonalds. The problem? None of it is true. A consumer contacted the BBB after she received a \$3,160 check to get started. We were able to tell her that the check was counterfeit, and this "business opportunity" is a Canadian scam!

House of Wesley sells plants and trees by mail order. Their guarantee gives the consumer a one-year free replacement guarantee, PROVIDED the original shipping label is returned. For a refund, the plant and shipping label must be returned within 14 days. Over 500 complaints have been filed against this Illinois company, and they have an unsatisfactory rating.

American Debt Arbitration offers debt relief for consumers experiencing financial difficulties. Over 45 complaints have been filed against this Clearwater company, and they have an unsatisfactory rating. The BBB suggests consumers needing this kind of service work with local debt management companies, and, of course, check them out with the BBB first.

Website: www.bbb.org

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Source	Better Business Bureau of Eastern NC
Website	https://www.bbb.org
City/Town	Raleigh
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