**UPDATE FROM THE MINISTER OF SENIORS, DEB SCHULTE**

On World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, I wanted to reach out to share some tips on how to be vigilant about fraud and abuse in these uncertain times.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put seniors at increased risk of abuse since so many are living in isolation. Today I am asking all Canadians check-in on our parents, grandparents, neighbours and friends. Please see my video here: <https://youtu.be/SW7O-ySgieQ>

**Keeping seniors’ benefits safe from fraudsters:**

With new financial supports to seniors during the pandemic, they may face an increased risk of being targeted by fraudsters.

The Government of Canada is providing a **one-time, tax-free payment** of $300 for seniors eligible for the Old Age Security pension and an additional $200 for seniors eligible for the Guaranteed Income Supplement.Allowance recipients will also receive $500. **Seniors do not need to apply for the payment and they should not share any personal or banking information to receive it.** Both direct deposit and cheque payments will be issued the week of July 6, 2020. Seniors who reside in Canada should expect to receive the payment that week. Those abroad will receive it in July.

Working seniors who stopped working due to reasons related to COVID-19 are eligible for the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit**, worth $2,000 a month. **Seniors should be wary of people they don’t know offering to help them apply for the benefit, often for a fee**. You can easily [apply online](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html) or by phone (1-833-966-2099) yourself. Seniors should also keep in mind they only have access to the benefit if they were working, earned over $5,000 in the previous year and stopped working due to the pandemic.

**Here are a few tips to help protect yourself from financial fraud:**

You may get phone calls, emails and texts on COVID-19. Be cautious when receiving them:

* remember that if you didn’t initiate contact with a person or a business, you don’t know who you are dealing with
* never click on links or attachments in unsolicited or suspicious emails
* never give out your personal or financial information by email or text
* note that financial institutions will never ask you to provide personal, login or account information by text or email
* when banking online, enter your financial institution’s website address in your browser yourself
* beware of questionable cures for sale: if it seems too good to be true, it probably is

For more information, check out our [Little Black Book of Scams](https://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca/eic/site/cb-bc.nsf/eng/04333.html) and the [Canadian Anti-fraud Centre](https://www.antifraudcentre-centreantifraude.ca/features-vedette/2020/covid-19-eng.htm). More tips on how to stay protected from Financial Fraud are available [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/covid-19-managing-financial-health.html#toc7).

**Conclusion:**

I look forward to keeping you informed and updated on the Government’s COVID-19 response for seniors. Thank you for all the valuable work and outstanding support you continue to provide during this challenging time.

Together, we can and we will get through this.

Sincerely,

Minister Deb Schulte

**Spread the News:**

I hope you’ll take a minute to ensure this message reaches as many seniors and the people who support them as possible. Please share it with your networks in whatever format works for you: such as social media, email or your newsletter.

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