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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Department of Elder Affairs Warns Floridians of Phone Scam**

*~ Beware of aggressive callers posing as senior service providers~*

**Tallahassee** – The Department of Elder Affairs is warning Florida residents to watch out for scam artists who are allegedly making calls pretending to be the Department or an organization they refer to as Senior Services. These callers are using a method known as “spoofing” to make it appear on Caller ID as if the call is coming from a number belonging to the Florida Department of Elder Affairs’ fax line – (850) 414-2004.

The callers are asking for personal information, including credit card information for payment of services, including funeral insurance, and are attempting to defraud those they call. Several individuals from across the state, including many who are not elders, have contacted the Department of Elder Affairs about the harassing calls.

The Department of Elder Affairs does not solicit payment for services of clients over the phone, nor does it contact individuals in this manner. As technology progresses, scammers and con artists, are finding new ways to exploit elders, including scam phone calls appearing to be from trustworthy organizations, like Elder Affairs or law enforcement.

In the last fiscal year, the Florida Department of Children and Families received more than 50,000 reports of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of Florida elders. More than 8,100, or 16 percent, were reports of financial exploitation – the third largest category of reported abuse. Nationwide, almost 90 percent of all elder abuse occurs in a domestic setting, usually by a family member or someone the victim knows. These figures do not include exploitation by strangers, so the numbers could actually be much higher when factoring in fraud attempts like these phone calls from unknown parties.

The Department of Elder Affairs reminds you to never give out personal information to unknown individuals who call you, including credit card or bank account information, technology passwords, or your Social Security number. If you receive a call from (850) 414-2004, do not provide the caller with any personal information; simply hang up. If you received one of these calls and provided payment to the callers, please contact your local law enforcement to file a report.

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*The Department of Elder Affairs, the State Unit on Aging, serves seniors as they live, contribute, and build legacies in Florida. For more information, please visit [elderaffairs.org](http://elderaffairs.org)*