



**Dave Jones Insurance Commissioner**

Insurance protection for all Californians

## SCAM ALERT

04/18/16

SC-01-2016

### **Pension Scam Targeting Senior Veterans**

Veterans and their loved ones should be aware of a scam involving fraudulent benefit plans. Scammers are contacting veterans and offering to move their assets around in order to qualify for a Veterans Affairs (VA) benefit, sometimes charging as much as \$6,000; at times converting the seniors' revocable trusts into irrevocable trusts without their consent or justification. In many cases, the veterans who are contacted do not qualify for VA benefits at all. As a result, they may be required to pay back money to the government for any benefits used that they were not actually entitled to.

Don't be a Victim – Tips from the Department of Insurance:

- We're here to help! Contact the California Department of Insurance if you think you or a loved one may be a victim of this scam or any other type of insurance scam.
  - ◊ By phone: 800-927-4357
  - ◊ [www.insurance.ca.gov](http://www.insurance.ca.gov)
- Never give personal information such as account or credit card numbers over the phone.
- Ask to see an insurance agent's credentials before conducting business with them. Report any suspicious activity to the California Department of Insurance.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- If you think you may qualify for a VA benefit, you can safely file a VA benefit claim free of charge through many different organizations, agents, and other resources. Search those resources here: <http://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
- General information on VA benefits and pensions such as eligibility and how to apply, can be found at: <http://www.benefits.va.gov/pension/vetpen.asp> or <http://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/PensionPoachingPostcard.pdf>

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**DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE**

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND POLICY INITIATIVES BRANCH  
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April 18, 2016

Dear Director:

As you know, Consumer Education is the key to fighting scams. We ask that you help us in our effort to protect seniors and veterans by posting the attached scam alert in your center or post. By sharing this information, seniors, veterans and their advocates can be aware of scams involving fraudulent benefit plans.

The California Department of Insurance (CDI) has established a Senior Information Center on our website, [www.insurance.ca.gov](http://www.insurance.ca.gov) which contains valuable information specifically for seniors and/or veterans. In addition to the senior specific insurance information provided on our site, we recommend that you also visit the Senior Gateway website at [www.seniors.ca.gov](http://www.seniors.ca.gov). This site is sponsored by the Elder Financial Abuse Interagency Roundtable (E-FAIR) of which the California Department of Insurance is a part

To protect seniors or veterans from becoming a victim, please report questionable sales practices to the California Department of Insurance and keep this tip on you bulletin board. Please feel free to make copies and distribute the enclosed Scam alert. If you have any questions about this letter or the enclosed Scam Alert, please contact the Department of Insurance consumer Hotline at 1-800-927-4357.

Thank you so much for your assistance with this effort.

Sincerely,

*Consumer Education & Outreach Bureau*

Enclosure