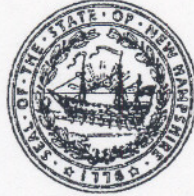


# The State of New Hampshire

Mailing Address

State House Room 204  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-4989  
Telephone (603) 271-1463  
Facsimile (603) 271-7933

Location

State House Annex  
25 Capitol St.  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Department of State  
Bureau of Securities Regulation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Scott Kirby  
Communications Director  
(603) 271-6837**

## **New Hampshire Securities Regulators Warn Seniors to be on the Lookout for Investment Fraud**

**Concord, N.H. (September 5, 2003)** – Unsteady stock markets, record low interest rates and rising health care costs are combining to create a perfect storm for investment fraud against senior investors, New Hampshire Securities Administrators warned today.

Securities Bureau Director, Mark Connolly, alerted senior investors in New Hampshire to the dangers of investment fraud and urged them to take control of their financial health. Connolly added that the bureau will begin airing a series of public service announcements later this month in an effort to alert seniors regarding unethical sales tactics and scam artists.

State securities regulators say older investors are being targeted with increasingly complex investment scams involving unregistered securities, promissory notes, charitable gift annuities, viatical settlements, and Ponzi schemes all promising inflated returns.

“Behind these schemes are opportunists who know that seniors and others living on fixed incomes are being squeezed in the current financial environment,” Connolly said. “Their products and pitches sound tempting to many seniors who’ve seen their retirement accounts dwindle in recent years – and who don’t have the benefit of time to recoup their losses.”

**-MORE-**

TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation  
Page 2 of 3

State regulators also urged seniors not to be ashamed to admit that they have been victims of investment fraud. "Silence will only help the con artists lead another victim into the trap. Every day that financial fraud goes unreported is another day that criminals can steal retirement savings from unsuspecting seniors," Connolly said.

"Common sense tells you that if something sounds too good to be true it almost always is. But you don't have to rely on common sense alone," Connolly said. Senior investors can contact the New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation (603-271-6837) with any questions about an investment. Seniors also can learn more about the dangers of investment fraud by visiting the online Senior Investor Resource Center ([www.nasaa.org](http://www.nasaa.org)), which has been developed specifically for senior audiences and offers a variety of important information and resources.

The New Hampshire Securities Bureau also offer the following tips to help seniors protect their retirement assets.

- **Don't be a courtesy victim.** Con artists will not hesitate to exploit your good manners. Save your good manners for friends and family members, not strangers looking for a quick buck!
- **Check out strangers touting strange deals.** Trusting strangers is a mistake everyone makes when it comes to their personal finances. Extensive background information on investment salespeople and firms is available from the Central Registration Depository (CRD) files available from your state securities agency.
- **Always stay in charge of your money.** Beware of anyone who suggests putting your money into something you don't understand or who urges that you leave everything in his or her hands.
- **Don't judge a book by its cover.** Successful con artists sound and look extremely professional and have the ability to make even the flimsiest investment deal sound as safe and sound as putting money in the bank. The sound of a voice, particularly on the phone, has no bearing on the soundness of an investment opportunity.
- **Watch out for salespeople who prey on your fears.** Con artists know that you worry about outliving your savings. Fear can cloud your good judgment. An investment that is right for you will make sense because you understand it and feel comfortable with the risk involved.

-MORE-

New Hampshire Bureau of Securities Regulation  
September 4, 2003  
Page 3 of 3

- **Don't make a tragedy worse with rash financial decisions.** The death or hospitalization of a spouse has many sad consequences – financial fraud shouldn't be one of them. If you find yourself suddenly in charge of your own finances, get the facts before you make any decisions. Arm yourself with information and your confidence will send con men running.
- **Monitor your investments and ask tough questions.** Don't compound the mistake of trusting an unscrupulous investment professional or outright con artist by failing to keep an eye on the progress of your investment. Insist on regular written and oral reports. Look for signs of excessive or unauthorized trading of your funds. And if you are stalled when you want to pull out your principal or profits from an investment, you have uncovered someone who wants to cheat you.
- **Don't let embarrassment or fear keep you from reporting investment fraud or abuse.** Con artists know that you might hesitate to report that you have been victimized in financial schemes out of embarrassment or fear. Con artists prey on your sensitivities and, in fact, count on these fears preventing or delaying the point at which authorities are notified of a scam. Every day that you delay reporting fraud is one more day that the con artist is spending your money and finding new victims.

-END-