



2025 Fraud & Scam Summit set for August 20

Fraud targeting the elderly is on the rise and resulted in nearly \$5 billion in financial losses throughout the U.S. in 2024.

This is one reason TARCOG wants to help the community learn about the most common scams and how to outsmart fraudsters at its upcoming Fraud & Scam Summit 2025. TARCOG's Senior Medicare Patrol Fraud & Scam Summit will be Wednesday, Aug. 20, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Sandridge Ballroom at Athens State University.

TARCOG's event is free to the public but **pre-registration is required**.

According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center data, in 2024 there was a total of \$4.885 billion in losses from 147,127 complaints of financial scams targeting seniors across the U.S. This was a 46 percent increase in complaints from 2023, as well as a 43 percent increase in losses.

The Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) at TARCOG empowers and assists Medicare beneficiaries their families and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors and abuse. The Fraud & Scam Summit will also provide an overview of scams and fraud in Alabama and cover topics like:

- How to recognize and avoid common scams
- Identity theft prevention tips
- The role of caregivers in spotting and reporting fraud
- Steps to take when you suspect financial abuse
- Key contacts and reporting agencies for immediate help

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Improving communities: New Golf Lab coming to Huntsville

Jassen and Kerry Garner understand the business world through their careers in the insurance industry. They are entrepreneurs at heart and are working to bring a new state-of-the-art indoor golf simulator center to Huntsville in August with the help of TARCOG's Revolving Loan Fund (RLF).

"Our simulators are going to provide a realistic and immersive golfing experience," Jassen said. "Whether you're looking to practice, play a full round, or improve your skills, our simulators are designed to accommodate golfers of all levels."

The new Golf Lab will be located in the Whitesburg Center shopping plaza at 5000 Whitesburg Drive at the Airport Road intersection. The entrance is nestled in the middle corner of the building.

Kerry said the center will provide all necessary equipment, including golf clubs, balls, and tees. But people are welcome to bring their own clubs.

[Read the story](#)



Jassen and Kerry Garner started working on buildout of their new Golf Lab in Huntsville in June. The new golf simulator center is set to open in August.

Let's talk about: Medicaid Waiver

At TARCOG's Area Agency on Aging, we are dedicated to ensuring quality care and support for the elderly and individuals with disabilities in our region. Our Elderly and Disabled Medicaid Waiver Program, which we refer to as simply the Medicaid Waiver Program, offers services to individuals at risk of nursing facility placement.

With the help of this program, clients can



remain in their homes and maintain independence, said Melissa Brinkley, Medicaid Waiver Program Manager

She said case managers make monthly home visits to assess needs and develop a person-centered plan of care, tailored to each client's medical requirements and personal situation.

“Our services include personal care to help with daily activities such as bathing and dressing, and homemaker services to keep your home clean and comfortable,” Melissa said. “Then we offer companion services which offer emotional support and social interaction, while respite care allows family caregivers to take time off, knowing their loved one is in good hands.”

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LaDaisha Stewart, one of TARCOG's Medicaid Waiver case manager, prepares to load her supplies into a vehicle to make an in-home visit to one of TARCOG's 1,000 clients throughout DeKalb, Jackson, Limestone, Madison and Marshall counties.

Senior Center Spotlight: New Hope

If there's one thing 92-year-old Robert Howell counts on, it's a hot meal from the New Hope Senior Center.

“I don't usually eat until around 2 in the afternoon so I like to take mine home so I can eat it when I'm ready,” Robert said sitting in the passenger seat of his daughter and son-in-law's car in the center parking lot. “I am so thankful for them here because I know I will be getting one good meal every day.”

A hot meal for lunch with friends is the main attraction at the New Hope Senior Center, said Dean Manley, center manager. He and Diane Honea run the center. Diane runs the Meals on Wheels program.

Dean said they serve 17 hot meals at the center and 9 meals are delivered to homebound participants.

There are activities and games made available to those who come to the center, but mostly, people come for the



Kay Witherow with her father Robert Howell and husband Joel picking up Robert's lunch at the New Hope Senior Center.

food, Dean said.

Robert is a prime example. A few years ago when his daughter Kay Witherow and her husband, Joel, moved to Grant, he went with them. Within a couple of weeks, he was ready to move back home and showed up at the New Hope center.

“He walked in the door and asked if he could come home,” Diane said. “I told him of course, and he wanted to know when he could get a meal.”

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Employee of the Month: Shanika Moore

Shanika Moore has been at TARCOG for two years and one month as a case manager and personal choice counselor. She recently was promoted to a case manager, level two.

She doesn't like to talk about herself, but her friendly personality and smile light up the path she walks each day.

Growing up, Shanika wanted to be a school teacher. Life took her a different route, and she wound up with a college degree in criminal justice and social work. Helping others has always been at the heart of how she's spent her life.

She worked with kids at the Harris Home for Children, and she helped her community working at Community Action Partnership. That's where she learned about the work at TARCOG and she decided to give it a try.

Shanika loves meeting new people and helping resolve their issues. She finds it rewarding and TARCOG is happy to have her on our team.



TARCOG Case Manager II and Personal Choice Counselor Shanika Moore

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UPDATE ON NEW OFFICE The exterior walls are in the final stages of being bricked! Interior walls are underway.

TARCOG Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Area Plan Public Hearing was held Monday, June 30. **Watch the meeting video for plan highlights.**

MASTERS GAMES REGIONAL COMPETITION Sixty one active North Alabama seniors will be competing from District 2 in the Masters Games of Alabama competitions that will be held Oct. 6-9, in Trussville. **See the winners here.**

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256-830-0818
P.O. Box 1087
Huntsville, AL 35805



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