**NAPSA Scam Advice Forum Feb 2025**

**Topic:** Prize and Sweepstakes Scams Our speaker will discuss frauds that claim the victim is the winner of a prize or sweepstakes.  Newer data shows that these disproportionately affect older consumers.  In addition, these are often ongoing frauds with continuing requests for more money.  The scammers are often operating from Jamaica and frequently impersonate PCH.

**Speaker: Chris Irving** is the Vice President of Consumer and Legal Affairs for Publishers Clearing House (PCH), headquartered in Jericho, New York. In this role, he spearheads the company's anti-scam initiatives, focusing on educating consumers and collaborating with law enforcement to address lottery and sweepstakes imposter scams that misuse the PCH name, as well as the names of other entities. His responsibilities include providing testimony and documentation to support criminal cases where the PCH name has been exploited to defraud individuals.

**Co-Hosts:** Steve Baker and Debbie Deem (on vacation this month) Sign up for Steve’s weekly ‘www.Bakerfraudreport.com’ for news/trends/ arrests/prosecutions worldwide on transnational frauds/scams.

**National Elder Fraud Hotline (U.S. DOJ)** 1-833-372-8311

National federal hotline for adults 60 and over to report fraud and providing support and resources/safety tips. Help with filing IC3 and FTC reports. Language line. <https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/stop-elder-fraud/providing-help-restoring-hope>

**Report Fraud to Local Police/APS as Well as One or More of These Federal Govt. Databases/Agencies**

* **FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center** [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)
* Federal Trade Commission [www.reportfraud.ftc.gov](http://www.reportfraud.ftc.gov)
* **Report Identity Theft to the FTC** [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov)
* **U.S. Secret Service:** If Crypto Investment Confidence Fraud - contact your local U.S. Secret Service office, in addition to filing an IC3 report. You can also file at CryptoFraud@SecretService.gov
* **FBI Guidance For Crypto-Currency Scam Victims in Completing an IC3 report** [https://www.ic3.gov/Media/Y2023/PSA230824](about:blank)
* **U.S Postal Inspection Service (USPIS)** [**https://www.uspis.gov/report**](https://www.uspis.gov/report)
  + **USPIS will be an important agency to report sweepstake/lottery frauds if mail is involved. You can also report to 1-877-876-2455**
* **For lottery and sweepstake frauds originating in Jamaica, you can also inform the U.S. Embassy in Kingston** at [KingstonACS@state.gov](mailto:KingstonACS@state.gov)

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) says lottery and sweepstakes are among the top scams reported each year. The most recent FTC data shows people reported the theft of over $301 million to this type of fraud.

**Publisher’s Clearinghouse (PCH) Fraud Resources**

* The PCH fraud reporting hotline and website that can take a consumer directly to their fraud reporting system that is forwarded to the FTC’s Consumer Sentinel System.
  + Leave a message with your fraud information at 1-800-392-4190
  + To report a PCH impersonation fraud online to PCH: [www.scamreport@pch.com](http://www.scamreport@pch.com) or <https://pch.custhelp.com/app/report_scam>
* PCH Fraud Protection Guidance: <https://info.pch.com/fraud-protection>
  + “At PCH the winning is always free, and you NEVER have to pay to claim a prize. Recognizing the difference between legitimate sweepstakes and other types of offers that may not be legitimate will help you protect yourself and your family.”
  + “If someone contacts you claiming to be from PCH and tells you that you've won a prize — then asks you to send a payment or money card to claim the prize — STOP! You have not heard from the real PCH.”
* Tips and Warning Signs: https://info.pch.com/tips-and-warning-signs

**Resources/Tip Sheets/Information from other agencies on lottery/sweepstake frauds**

* **US Postal Inspection Service**
  + International Lottery Scams:
    - https://www.uspis.gov/news/scam-article/international-lottery-scams
  + National Consumer Protection Week 2025 on Imposters-
    - Including Sweepstakes/Lotteries: <https://www.uspis.gov/ncpw-2025>
  + Some victims in lottery/sweepstake frauds are recruited to be money mules.
    - https://www.uspis.gov/news/scam-article/money-mule
  + ‘Melba’ Victim Video (may be helpful to show to a victim)
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TaBXfuJhEY>
* **US Embassy in Jamaica Warning:**
  + https://jm.usembassy.gov/lottery-scams/
* **AARP warning on Fake Sweepstakes and Lottery Scams**
  + https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/sweepstakes/
* **AARP Warnings on Fake Checks**
  + <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/fake-check-what-you-need-to-know/?intcmp=AE-FRDSC-MOR-R2-POS3>
* **Steve Baker’s in-depth study of lottery frauds for the BBB**
  + <https://www.bbb.org/all/scamstudies/sweepstakes--lottery--and-prize-scams/sweepstakes--lottery--and-prize-scam-full-study>
* **Mega millions Alert re Scams**
  + <https://www.megamillions.com/News/2022/Advisory-Be-Alert-for-Mega-Millions%C2%AE-Scams.aspx>
* **Listing of state lottery commissions** 
  + It may be helpful to contact these commissions in advance to see if they will take a call from someone victimized believing they won the PCH, Mega millions, Readers Digest or Winners Circle, who can verify these are imposters. <https://www.megamillions.com/Contact-Us.aspx>
* **FBI Director William Webster video talking to online lottery criminal**
  + https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqsgKsO6H\_c
* **Jamaican Lottery Scams Target Elderly Americans** 
  + (CBS News- 11 years old but still happening) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaqVL9yJVzM

**FTC Warnings**

* Fake Prize, Sweepstakes and Lottery Scams:
  + https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/fake-prize-sweepstakes-and-lottery-scams#what
* Are You Really A Lucky Winner:
  + <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2023/04/are-you-really-lucky-winner-spot-prize-scams>

**FTC Warning on Govt Grant Imposter Frauds**

* <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/government-grant-scams>

**Free National Online Support Programs (for all ages)**

* **AARP Fraud Support Group** Support for victims and family members of these frauds: To register (you don’t have to be AARP member, no age restriction).
  + <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/fraud-victim-support-group/?cmp=RDRCT-CSN-FRD-NEW-SUPPORT_GROUP_PAGE>

* **Cybercrime Support Network** Free romance imposter fraud 10 week online peer support program.
  + [https://fightcybercrime.org/programs/romance-scam-recovery-group/](about:blank)
* **GiveAnHour**  Monthly free support programs for fraud victims and family members.
  + [https://giveanhour.org/financial-fraud/](about:blank)
* **Cathy Wilson, Therapist Lifepaths Counseling**
  + https://www.scamsurvivorhealing.com/
  + Free video series for victims of romance imposter and other frauds/scams.
    - [https://www.scamsurvivorhealing.com/video-1/](about:blank)
    - https://www.youtube.com/@fraudpsychology