TENNESSEE ELDER JUSTICE COALITION

WEEKLY UPDATE

July 13, 2026 | Intelligence, prevention, and action for Tennessee's elder justice network

TENNESSEE'S CRYPTO ATM BAN SURVIVES ITS FIRST COURT TEST

A federal court has rejected an industry effort to temporarily block Tennessee's new statewide ban on cryptocurrency ATMs. The law remains in effect, preserving a major consumer-protection measure for older and vulnerable Tennesseans. The ruling is important - but it does not end crypto-enabled fraud. Scammers will simply redirect victims to other payment channels.

Coalition takeaway: shift public messaging from *"Do not use the kiosk"* to *"No legitimate organization will tell you to move money to protect it."* Watch for online cryptocurrency exchanges, wire transfers, gift cards, gold purchases, payment apps, QR codes, and courier pickups.

Read the Tennessee Attorney General's July 7 announcement

$7.7 BILLION	200,000+	$108 MILLION
reported losses among adults 60+ in 2025	IC3 complaints from adults 60+ in 2025	reported Tennessee elder-fraud losses in 2025

THE NEXT PAYMENT ROUTE

The ban closes one high-risk doorway, but the criminal playbook remains intact. Scammers create panic, isolate the victim, and then direct the victim to a payment method that is fast, difficult to reverse, and outside normal fraud controls.

- Online crypto exchanges and wallet transfers
- Bank wires and person-to-person payment apps
- Gift cards, gold, cash, and courier pickups
- QR codes embedded in texts, emails, and fake invoices

Best intervention question: "Who told you to move this money, and why did they say it had to happen today?"

SOCIAL MEDIA ALERT

Fake agency pages, copied seals, sponsored investment ads, celebrity endorsements, and "recovery specialists" are being used to establish instant credibility. A professional-looking profile is not proof of legitimacy.

Before acting, partners should encourage older adults to:

- Leave the message or platform without replying
- Find the agency or company independently
- Call a known number - never the number in the message
- Screenshot the account, advertisement, and payment request

CASES TO WATCH: THE SAME PSYCHOLOGY, DIFFERENT PRODUCTS

PRECIOUS METALS	A Dallas man was federally indicted in an alleged scheme that persuaded older victims to use retirement funds to buy precious metals. The case is a reminder that "safe haven" language can be used to make gold and silver sound like protection rather than payment.	DOJ case
SWEEPSTAKES	A Jamaican national was sentenced to 66 months in prison for a multimillion-dollar sweepstakes fraud scheme targeting older adults. Prize scams continue to depend on advance fees, taxes, secrecy, and repeated re-contact.	DOJ case

THE SECOND HIT: RECOVERY SCAMS

Prior victims are often targeted again by criminals posing as regulators, attorneys, investigators, or asset-recovery companies. They claim lost funds have been located - but require an upfront tax, bond, fee, or "verification payment."

Core message: Legitimate law enforcement agencies and regulators do not charge victims to recover stolen money. A request for an advance fee is a warning that the recovery offer may be another scam.

WHY IT WORKS

Recovery scams exploit hope rather than fear. The victim may already be emotionally exhausted, financially harmed, and eager for closure. Criminals may know the exact amount lost and details of the original scam because victim lists are shared or sold.

Follow-up practice: Check back with prior victims. Continued contact and support can prevent revictimization.

A MODEL WORTH WATCHING: REAL-TIME GOVERNMENT VERIFICATION

San Francisco launched a citywide initiative that will allow residents to verify whether payment requests claiming to come from city government are legitimate. The concept is simple and transferable: create a trusted, visible verification channel before money moves. For Tennessee partners, this raises an important question - can agencies, courts, utilities, and law enforcement make their authentic payment practices easier for the public to confirm?

Read about the StopScams SF initiative

HEALTHCARE FRAUD ALERT

Unsolicited telehealth and medical-equipment offers: Older adults may be contacted with promises of "free" braces, genetic tests, supplies, or services. The caller may request a Medicare number or pressure the person to complete a telehealth visit they did not request.

Share this: Medicare information is as valuable as a credit card number. Do not provide it to an unsolicited caller.

ABUSE IS MORE THAN FRAUD

Coalition messaging should continue to include physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, caregiver exploitation, and isolation. Warning signs may include unexplained injuries, poor hygiene, sudden withdrawal, missing medications, abrupt financial changes, or a new person controlling access.

Suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation in Tennessee: Adult Protective Services - 1-888-277-8366.

COALITION ACTION CORNER - USE THIS WEEK

- **Financial institutions:** Ask about the story behind unusual withdrawals, gold purchases, wires, and transfers to new payees. A short pause can expose the scam narrative.
- **Law enforcement:** Preserve screenshots, wallet addresses, QR codes, email headers, social profiles, receipts, shipping labels, and courier descriptions.
- **APS, aging, healthcare, and victim advocates:** Normalize reporting and reduce shame. Re-contact prior victims because repeat targeting is common.
- **Community educators:** Replace long scam lists with four behavioral warnings: urgency, secrecy, isolation, and unusual money movement.

MESSAGE TO SHARE

"No legitimate government agency, bank, law enforcement officer, utility, court, or business will tell you to move money to protect it. Stop. Verify through a known number. Report before more money moves."

REPORTING & VICTIM SUPPORT

Tennessee APS: 1-888-277-8366 | **FBI IC3:** ic3.gov | **FTC:** ReportFraud.ftc.gov
National Elder Fraud Hotline: 1-833-FRAUD-11 (1-833-372-8311), Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Eastern

SOURCES

- Tennessee Attorney General - court ruling allowing crypto ATM ban to remain in effect
- DOJ Elder Justice Initiative - current prosecutions and press releases
- DOJ - precious metals scam indictment targeting elderly victims
- FBI - 2025 elder fraud data and prevention guidance
- FTC - imposter scam prevention and older-adult resources
- Axios - StopScams SF government impersonation initiative
- Aging Ahead - July 2026 Medicare/telehealth fraud prevention tip
- WSMV - Tennessee 2025 elder-fraud losses