**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**April 30, 2021**

CONTACT: Carolyn Assa

carolyn.assa@mass,gov

**Protection Agencies Host Virtual Consumer Workshop**

**Join OEE, MCOA, and OCABR to Learn about Available Programs and Resources**

The Treasurer’s Office of Economic Empowerment (OEE), the Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA), and the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation (OCABR) partner to host a virtual consumer workshop to talk about available protections from their respective agencies. Hear from leaders of these organizations about resources their offices provide to all Massachusetts residents.

The one-hour workshop will also address scams targeting seniors, and others, across the Commonwealth. Participants will gain knowledge of available consumer supports as well as leave with a list of financial literacy resources; and, they will learn how to identify and combat fraud. The panel will include: State Treasurer **Deborah B. Goldberg**, MCOA Director of Member Services **Susan Carp**, and Undersecretary of OCABR **Edward A. Palleschi**, as well as OCABR Community Outreach Manager **Robin Putnam** who will serve as moderator. This virtual event will be held via Zoom on **Monday, 5/3/21 at 11:00am**. It is free and open to all. [Register here](https://www.mass.gov/event/ocabr-the-treasurers-office-of-economic-empowerment-and-the-massachusetts-councils-on-aging-present-an-economic-forum-for-consumers-2021-05-03t110000-0400-2021-05-03t120000-0400).

“Providing education about potential frauds or scams helps to keep people safe and empowers them to make well informed financial decisions,” said State Treasurer **Deborah B. Goldberg**. “With the pandemic and evolving digital landscape, it is essential we ensure that seniors have the tools and resources to recognize deception and protect themselves before it is too late.

This workshop is part of series of virtual events designed to help Massachusetts consumers be more informed and empowered. During this workshop on economic security, attendees will be able to ask questions and receive real-time responses from our panel of experts. Participants will learn about state education programs, how to sign up for them and how to take advantage of them.

“The Massachusetts Councils on Aging have offices throughout the state that offer in-person and virtual resources for all seniors. During non-pandemic times many of our constituents visited our sites regularly, and over the past year we have gone out of our way to stay connected virtually, but this has been a hard time for seniors who have often felt isolated due to state mandates for social distancing. Hosting events like this gives us the opportunity to reach our audience and offer additional supports and resources to them,” said **David P. Stevens**, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Councils on Aging.

As technology advances and the world continues to change, consumers will need to continually adapt and learn about how to protect themselves from new and evolving deceptions. The best way to do that is to have reliable sources like the OEE, MCOA, and OCABR to turn to for guidance, resources, and training. The Consumer Workshop will give an overview of tips on protecting your finances and address the most prevalent scams facing consumers today while offering tips on how to recognize and avoid these scams.

“Protecting your finances and your personal information has never been more important than it is today especially as we all move more and more toward doing everything digitally. No matter your age, there are always precautions you can take to safeguard your assets,” said **Edward A. Palleschi, Undersecretary of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**. “OCABR seeks to inform and empower consumers throughout the Commonwealth and is proud to be able to collaborate with other agencies to provide access to a broader range of resources.”

**About the Treasurer’s Office of Economic Empowerment**

The Office of Economic Empowerment (OEE) is a department within the Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General of Massachusetts tasked with supporting, advocating, and facilitating policies that empower all Massachusetts residents.

**About the Massachusetts Councils on Aging**

The Massachusetts Councils on Aging (MCOA) is a nonprofit, membership association of the 350 municipal councils on aging and senior centers. COAs are the first stop on the continuum of care. We support the 1.7 million older adults, 60 and over in Massachusetts, lead healthy, purposeful lives.

**About the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**

The Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation empowers Massachusetts consumers through advocacy, community outreach, education programs, and partnerships while ensuring a fair and competitive marketplace for the business its five agencies regulate. In advancing its mission, OCABR continually strives to find a balance between protecting consumer rights and supporting business vitality in the Commonwealth.

**###**