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February 2024 Topics:

- **Texas Extends Postpartum Medicaid Coverage**
- **HHSC Warns Texans About Phone Scammers**
- **Willie Piper Honored for Foster Grandparent Program Service**
- **Kerrville State Hospital to Learn Historic Background**

Texas Extends Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

[Low-income Texas Mothers Will Receive Free Medicaid Coverage for One Year After Childbirth](#)

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HHSC Warns Texans About Phone Scammers

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Willie Piper Honored for Foster Grandparent Program Service

['Grandma Piper' honored for 50,000 hours mentoring Travis County children in the Foster Grandparent Program](#)

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Hoodline News
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Kerrville State Hospital to Learn Historic Background

[Historical commission will learn background of Kerrville State Hospital](#)

Kerrville Daily Times
February 16, 2024

The full articles have been added below for your convenience.

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Texas Extends Postpartum Medicaid Coverage

[Low-income Texas Mothers Will Receive Free Medicaid Coverage for One Year After Childbirth](#)

Clarence Walker
NewsBreak
February 18, 2024

Low-income women in Texas are set to receive extended postpartum Medicaid coverage for 12 months following the approval by the federal government. In addition to prenatal care, Medicaid encompasses various essential services such as checkups for both mothers and their children.



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Beginning March 1, low-income Texas mothers can receive Medicaid coverage for one year after childbirth. The federal government approved Texas' extension on January 17.

Medicaid covered nearly half of Texas births in 2022, according to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation. Yet low-income women are currently eligible for two months of postpartum coverage.

Automatically Re-enrolled

New and current participants will qualify for the extension. Women whose Medicaid benefits lapsed before March 1 will be re-enrolled automatically, and they will receive coverage for 12 months following the conclusion of their pregnancy, as per Gov. Greg Abbott's office.

Over 137,000 new parents will benefit from the extension, according to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

Beyond prenatal care, Medicaid covers checkups and other services for mothers and their children.

"This is a fantastic step forward to support healthy moms and babies," said Diana Forester, the director of health policy at Texans Care for Children, in a statement.

Rising Maternal Deaths

Texas is the 43rd state to extend postpartum Medicaid coverage to 12 months. The change is a top recommendation of the Texas Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Review Committee, which documented rising rates of maternal deaths and severe complications in its 2022 report.

Maternal health advocates have pushed for the extension for years, but proposals stalled as lawmakers argued over coverage for women who had abortions.

In 2021, lawmakers agreed to a six-month extension, but the federal government did not approve it.

Rep. Toni Rose, D-Dallas, led a bipartisan effort to expand coverage for low-income women during the 2023 legislative session. The legislation, known as House Bill 12, includes a "legislative purpose" section that says only "mothers whose pregnancies end in the delivery of the child or end in the natural loss of the child" are eligible for the extension, according to Community Impact News.

Decked Stacked Against Mothers

"The deck is stacked against new mothers and women that are expecting," Rose said in a statement. "The simple fact of the matter is that only providing new mothers with postpartum care for two months is unacceptable."



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Texas Democrats said they would fight to expand Medicaid coverage for more Texans.

"We are so grateful to Rep. Toni Rose, Sen. Lois Kolkhorst, the staff at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission ... and everyone else who worked hard to make this happen," Forester said. "Disagreements between elected officials get a lot of attention, but this is an example of how our state legislators really can come together to improve access to health care for Texas families."

Texans who are eligible for Medicaid coverage can access their plan and update their information at www.yourtexasbenefits.com.

Texas extends postpartum coverage for Medicaid and CHIP recipients

KWES-TV

February 28, 2024

Starting on March 1, Texas will provide 12 months of postpartum care for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program beneficiaries who qualify, according to Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Health and Human Services Commission.

"Working with partners in the Texas Legislature last year—including Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Toni Rose—we delivered critical bipartisan legislation to extend postpartum coverage for Texas mothers from two months to one year," said Governor Abbott. "By extending postpartum Medicaid and CHIP coverage, we will help ensure new mothers and the most vulnerable young Texans receive critical healthcare resources they need to care for their families and thrive."

House Bill 12 was signed into law in 2023, extending Medicaid and CHIP postpartum care from two months to 12 months.

The extended coverage applies to all pregnant Medicaid and CHIP members, or those who get pregnant.

Governor Abbott and the HHSC announced in January that Texas got approval from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement this postpartum coverage.

Individuals who live in Texas and were pregnant while enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP will have their coverage automatically restored for the rest of their 12-month postpartum period.



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Some services covered by Medicaid and CHIP are regular medical checkups, prescription drugs and vaccines, hospital care and services, along with X-rays and lab tests.

The press release states that approximately 137,000 women will benefit from 12-month postpartum coverage in the fiscal year 2025.

[Texas Extends Postpartum Coverage For Medicaid, CHIP Recipients](#)

Brownwood News
February 29, 2024

Governor Greg Abbott this week announced that Texas is extending postpartum coverage to 12 months for eligible Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) recipients through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), effective March 1, 2024.

"Working with partners in the Texas Legislature last year—including Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Toni Rose—we delivered critical bipartisan legislation to extend postpartum coverage for Texas mothers from two months to one year," said Governor Abbott. "By extending postpartum Medicaid and CHIP coverage, we will help ensure new mothers and the most vulnerable young Texans receive critical healthcare resources they need to care for their families and thrive."

"Extending postpartum coverage will help new mothers access needed healthcare services," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young. "HHSC is proud to continue supporting Texas families."

Last year, Governor Abbott signed House Bill 12 into law, extending Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage from two to 12 months. Anyone enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP who is pregnant or becomes pregnant is eligible for the extended coverage. In January, the Governor and HHSC announced that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved Texas' request to make this extension of postpartum coverage.

Coverage will be automatically reinstated for individuals who were enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP in Texas while pregnant and are still within their 12-month postpartum period, as long as they still live in Texas. Coverage will be reinstated for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Women who transitioned from Medicaid or CHIP to Healthy Texas Women after their pregnancy ended and are still within their 12-month postpartum period will be transitioned back to full-coverage Medicaid or CHIP for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Among the numerous services covered by Medicaid and CHIP are:

Regular medical checkups

Prescription drugs and vaccines

Hospital care and services

X-rays and lab tests

Vision and hearing care

Access to medical specialists and mental health care

Treatment of special health needs and preexisting conditions

Texas projects approximately 137,000 women will benefit from 12-month postpartum coverage in fiscal year 2025.

Find more information on Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage on HHSC's Women and Children webpage. To apply for Medicaid or CHIP, call 2-1-1 and choose Option 2 or visit YourTexasBenefits.com.

[Texas extends postpartum Medicaid and CHIP coverage for mothers](#)

Ashley Brown

Houston Public Media

February 29, 2024

Starting March 1, Texas mothers eligible for Medicaid, or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), will be able to get postpartum coverage up to a year after childbirth.

Medicaid covers half of Texas births, but previously coverage expired two months postpartum. Last year, Abbott signed House Bill 12 into law, expanding Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage. The extension request was approved last month by the Federal Centers for Medicaid and Medicare services.

The State of Texas predicts approximately 137,000 women will benefit from 12-month postpartum coverage in 2025.

"Working with partners in the Texas Legislature last year—including Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Toni Rose—we delivered critical bipartisan legislation to extend postpartum coverage for Texas mothers from two months to one year," said Abbott in a press release Wednesday. "By extending postpartum Medicaid and CHIP coverage, we will help ensure new



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mothers and the most vulnerable young Texans receive critical healthcare resources they need to care for their families and thrive."

Health experts say postpartum care is crucial for mothers recovering after childbirth. Dr. McClain Sampson is a Fellow of Maternal and Reproductive health at the Baker Institute for Public Policy and an Associate Professor at the University of Houston's Graduate College of Social Work. She said the extension will address a critical part of early motherhood.

"This is really good news," she said. "The postpartum period, which is considered from right after childbirth, all the way up to 12 months postpartum, a lot of important health things need to be monitored."

Sampson said medical conditions like postpartum depression can occur from as early as four weeks to 12 months postpartum and lead to postpartum anxiety and perinatal mood disorders. She said there's also other health issues that a mother can endure.

"If someone had high blood pressure during pregnancy, she really needs to be made aware of her high blood pressure after pregnancy," she said. "Also, if somebody went into pregnancy with gestational diabetes, how is that diabetes being treated at two months postpartum, 6 months, 12 months. It's an important time of health and mental health vulnerability and having insurance coverage for 12 months could possibly really have a significant positive effect for."

CHIP and Medicaid recipients who were already enrolled into the program while pregnant will have their coverage automatically reinstated for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period, if they still live in Texas. Women who transitioned from Medicaid or CHIP to Healthy Texas Women after their pregnancy ended and are still within their postpartum period will be transitioned back to full-coverage for the remainder of the period.

Sampson said many women do not enroll in Medicaid until their second or third trimester for various reasons like the length of enrollment or lack of providers compared to women with private insurance. Texas, like many other states, has a high mortality rate, and it's the highest among African-American women.

"With Medicaid, we have a huge shortage of Medicaid providers, especially in this maternal health space," said Sampson. "Even though one in two births are financed by Medicaid, that doesn't mean we have enough providers to see the share of the volume of women who are on Medicaid. So that's one reason that it takes some women a long time to get on to Medicaid, because the enrollment process may take one week up to two months."

Texas is joining other states and the District of Columbia by extending coverage, a years-long fight.

"We are not valuing the health of the woman," said Sampson. "I really think it's a matter of value. If we truly valued a woman's health during pregnancy and postpartum again, these are highly vulnerable times for mental health and physical health issues. Then we would have policies that protect women during these time periods, we would have insurance that is not burdensome to enroll in, we would have enough providers to see people who are on Medicaid, and wouldn't have only one in four women on insurance."

Sampson recommends women check with their local state Medicaid office to confirm their extended coverage. She said Houston has a local nonprofit called Civic Heart, that helps residents enroll in Medicaid. She works with the nonprofit as well as being the principal Investigator of the Healthy Start Program at UH.

"Extending postpartum coverage will help new mothers access needed healthcare services," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young in a press release. "HHSC is proud to continue supporting Texas families."

Medicaid and CHIP offer several medical services, including:

- Regular medical checkups
- Prescription drugs and vaccines
- Hospital care and services
- X-rays and lab tests
- Vision and hearing care
- Access to medical specialists and mental health care
- Treatment of special health needs and pre-existing conditions

[Texas, Gov. Abbott Extends Postpartum Coverage for Medicaid & CHIP Recipients](#)

Gilbert Rodriguez
Texas Insider
February 29, 2024

"By extending postpartum Medicaid and CHIP coverage, we will help ensure new mothers and the most vulnerable young Texans receive critical healthcare resources they need to care for their families and thrive," said Governor Greg Abbott earlier today, announcing that effective



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March 1st, Texas is extending its postpartum health coverage to 12 months for eligible Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) recipients through the Texas Health & Human Services Commission (HHSC.)

Texas projects approximately 137,000 women will benefit from 12-month postpartum coverage in fiscal year 2025.

"Working with partners in the Texas Legislature last year – including Senator Lois Kolkhorst and Representative Toni Rose – we delivered critical bipartisan legislation to extend postpartum coverage for Texas mothers from two months to one year," said Governor Abbott.

Last year, Governor Abbott signed House Bill 12 into law, extending Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage from two to 12 months. Anyone enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP who is pregnant or becomes pregnant is eligible for the extended coverage.

In January, the Governor and HHSC announced that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services approved Texas' request to make this extension of postpartum coverage.

"Extending postpartum coverage will help new mothers access needed healthcare services," said HHS Executive Commissioner Cecile Erwin Young.

"HHSC is proud to continue supporting Texas families."

Coverage will be automatically reinstated for individuals who were enrolled in Medicaid or CHIP in Texas while pregnant and are still within their 12-month postpartum period, as long as they still live in Texas.

Coverage will be reinstated for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Women who transitioned from Medicaid or CHIP to Healthy Texas Women after their pregnancy ended and are still within their 12-month postpartum period will be transitioned back to full-coverage Medicaid or CHIP for the remainder of their 12-month postpartum period.

Among the numerous services covered by Medicaid and CHIP are:

- Regular medical checkups
- Prescription drugs and vaccines
- Hospital care and services
- X-rays and lab tests
- Vision and hearing care



Access to medical specialists and mental health care

Treatment of special health needs and preexisting conditions

Find more information on Medicaid and CHIP postpartum coverage on HHSC's Women and Children webpage.

To apply for Medicaid or CHIP, call 2-1-1 and choose Option 2 or visit YourTexasBenefits.com.

HHSC Warns Texans About Phone Scammers

[Rise in Lone Star Card Scams Targets SNAP, TANF Beneficiaries: Texas HHS Alerts Public](#)

BNN Breaking News

February 27, 2024

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has sounded the alarm over an escalating number of complaints concerning a sophisticated phone scam aimed at defrauding recipients of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Utilizing a deceptive technique known as spoofing, these scammers pose as the Lone Star Card Help Desk, thereby misleading victims into divulging sensitive personal information with promises of new or augmented benefits.

Understanding the Scam: Techniques and Targets

At the heart of this scam lies the method of spoofing, where fraudsters manipulate caller ID systems to mimic the official Lone Star Card Help Desk's number, thus gaining the trust of unsuspecting individuals. Once contact is established, the scammer, often utilizing a pre-recorded message, requests the victim's PIN, Social Security number, and date of birth, under the guise of offering enhanced benefits. This alarming trend has seen the HHS Office of Inspector General's Fraud Hotline receiving between 10 to 15 complaints daily, highlighting the scam's growing prevalence.

Official Response and Advice

In response to these alarming reports, HHS Inspector General Raymond Charles Winter has issued a stern warning to the public, advising against sharing personal information over the phone with unsolicited callers, irrespective of the caller ID displayed. Winter's statement underscores the importance of skepticism and vigilance in the face of such deceptive tactics. He further emphasizes the necessity of reporting any suspicious activities to the Lone Star Card Help Desk, the Office of Inspector General, and local law enforcement authorities, as a means of combating this fraudulent scheme.



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Preventive Measures and Resources

To arm the public against such deceitful practices, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission advocates for increased awareness and education on fraud prevention strategies. Beneficiaries of SNAP and TANF are encouraged to visit the HHS Lone Star Card Fraud Awareness and Prevention page to familiarize themselves with tips and techniques to safeguard against potential scams. This proactive approach seeks to minimize the impact of fraud on vulnerable populations, ensuring that assistance reaches those who genuinely need it.

As these phone scams continue to evolve, the collective efforts of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, law enforcement agencies, and the public will be pivotal in thwarting the malicious intentions of fraudsters. By staying informed, vigilant, and ready to report suspicious activities, Texans can help protect not only their personal information but also the integrity of essential assistance programs like SNAP and TANF.

[Texas HHSC warns about phone scam targeting Lone Star card, SNAP and TANF recipients](#)

Sandy Rojas
Fox West Texas
February 27, 2024

A new low has been achieved by scammers and the lengths they'll go to steal information and funds from people. Phone scammers are now spoofing Lone Star card users who receive SNAP and TANF benefits.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission said Tuesday it is receiving an increasing number of complaints about a spoofing scam to target clients who use Lone Star cards and receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

"There are millions of Texans who need our benefits, and we don't want them taken advantage of," HHSC Access and Eligibility Services Deputy Executive Commissioner, Molly Regan, said. "We know how important these benefits are, so we're doing all we can to help prevent fraud and make it easy to report it when it happens."

The HHS Office of Inspector General reports its fraud hotline is getting 10-15 complaints per day about the new spoofing scam that mimics the Lone Star Card Help Desk, lulling victims into a false sense of security.

Victims report receiving a call with the Lone Star Card Help Desk caller ID, 800-777-7328. The caller, sometimes a prerecorded voice, asks for the client's personal identification number (PIN), Social Security number and date of birth in exchange for new or increased benefits.

"As the OIG Fraud Hotline identifies new and increasingly sophisticated scams, we want Texans to be able to protect themselves against those attempts to steal their information," HHS Inspector General, Raymond Charles Winter, said. "Regardless of what the caller ID says, do not provide any personal information in response to an unsolicited call."

HHSC will never contact recipients by phone, text or via email to ask for card numbers or PINs. Anyone concerned about a call regarding benefits should hang up and call the number on the back of their Lone Star card.

Anyone affected by Lone Star Card fraud should take immediate action by calling the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328, reporting it to the OIG at 800-436-6184, and contacting local law enforcement.

Anyone who loses benefits as a result of the scam can request replacement benefits through their local HHSC office.

Anyone with an immediate need for food assistance can contact a local food bank or food pantry by calling 2-1-1 and selecting option 1, or by visiting 211Texas.org.

[Texans warned of Lone Star Card phone scams](#)

Fox 26 Houston
February 27, 2024

Texas Health and Human Services Commission reports an increase in complaints about a phone scam targeting Lone Star Card clients and those who benefit from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

According to the Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General (OIG), the Fraud Hotline received 10 to 15 daily complaints about a telephone scam using spoofing to impersonate the Lone Star Card Help Desk.



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Victims say they received calls from the Lone Star Card Help Desk caller ID with the 800-777-7328 phone number. The caller was occasionally a prerecorded voice that solicited the client's PIN, Social Security number, and date of birth to be used for new or increased benefits.

Molly Regan, HHSC Access and Eligibility Services Deputy Executive Commissioner emphasized the importance of protecting benefits, stating, "There are millions of Texans who need our benefits, and we don't want them taken advantage of."

HHS Inspector General Raymond Charles Winter advised caution, stating, "As the OIG Fraud Hotline identifies new and increasingly sophisticated scams, we want Texans to be able to protect themselves against those attempts to steal their information."

The Texas agency wants to remind clients, HHSC will never reach out via phone, text, or email to ask for a card number and PIN. Clients are asked to verify HHSC's authenticity by hanging up and calling the number on the back of their Lone Star Card if they receive concerning calls about their benefits.

In the event of Lone Star Card fraud, individuals are encouraged to promptly contact the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328, report it to the OIG at 800-436-6184, and notify local law enforcement.

Those affected by the scam can seek replacement benefits through their local HHSC office. Individuals requiring immediate food assistance can reach out to local food banks or pantries by dialing 2-1-1 and selecting option 1 or visiting 211Texas.org.

For more guidance on fraud prevention, visit the HHS Lone Star Card Fraud Awareness and Prevention webpage.

[HHSC warns about a scam targeting Texans with Lone Star Cards](#)

Krista Summerville
WFAA-TV
February 28, 2024

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is warning Texans about how scammers are targeting families who use state benefits cards.



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The agency said it is getting more complaints about the fraud involving Lone Star cardholders who get benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

According to the agency's warning, the HHSC's Office of Inspector General (OIG) reports that its Fraud Hotline gets 10-15 daily complaints about the new telephone scheme involving spoofing. It mimics the Lone Star Card Help Desk, which the agency said lulls victims into a false sense of security.

"As the OIG Fraud Hotline identifies new and increasingly sophisticated scams, we want Texans to be able to protect themselves against those attempts to steal their information," said HHS Inspector General Raymond Charles Winter.

Victims say the call lists the Lone Star Card Help Desk on the caller ID. Then the caller, sometimes a prerecorded voice, asks for the client's PIN, Social Security number and date of birth in exchange for new or increased benefits.

"Regardless of what the caller ID says, do not provide any personal information in response to an unsolicited call," said Winter.

The agency wants to remind clients that HHSC will never reach out by phone, text, or email to ask for their card number and PIN. If you are concerned about a call you received regarding your benefits, confirm it is HHSC by hanging up and calling the number on the back of your Lone Star Card.

If you believe you've been a victim of fraud call the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328, report it to the OIG at 800-436-6184 or contact your local law enforcement agency.

Anyone who lost benefits as a result of the scam can request replacement benefits through their local HHSC office. The agency also provided tips on how to protect yourself and not fall victim.

[Scam Alert: Scammers target Lone Star Card users](#)

Abigail Jones

KAUZ-TV

February 28, 2024

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission reported an increasing number of complaints about a phone scam targeting users of Lone Star Cards.

Lone Star Card users receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

“There are millions of Texans who need our benefits, and we don’t want them taken advantage of,” said HHSC Access and Eligibility Services Deputy Executive Commissioner Molly Regan. “We know how important these benefits are, so we’re doing all we can to help prevent fraud and make it easy to report it when it happens.”

The number of complaints about this scam has reached 10 to 15 a day according to the HHS Office of Inspector General.

The telephone scam uses a technique called spoofing to mimic the Lone Star Card Help Desk and even display its caller ID at 800-777-7328. This lulls victims into a false sense of security. The caller is sometimes in a prerecorded voice and will ask for the client’s PIN, Social Security Number and date of birth to receive new or better benefits.

“As the OIG Fraud Hotline identifies new and increasingly sophisticated scams, we want Texans to be able to protect themselves against those attempts to steal their information,” said HHS Inspector General Raymond Charles Winter. “Regardless of what the caller ID says, do not provide any personal information in response to an unsolicited call.”

HHSC will never call, text or email clients to ask for personal information. If you are concerned about a call being fraudulent, hang up and call the number on the back of your Lone Star Card.

Anyone affected by this scam should immediately call the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328 and report it to the OIG at 800-436-6184. It is also recommended that you contact your local law enforcement agency.

Those who have lost benefits as a result of this scam can request replacement benefits through their local HHSC office. The Wichita Falls HHSC can be reached at 940- 767-1720.

If you have an immediate need for food, find your local food bank or pantry by calling 2-1-1 and selecting option 1 or visiting the website here.

[Texas Health and Human Services Commission warns about scammers targeting Lone Star Cards](#)

Maci Weathers

KAMR-TV

February 29, 2024

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission has been receiving an increasing number of complaints about a phone scam targeting clients who use Lone Star Cards and receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

According to a press release sent by HHSC, the HHSC Office of Inspector General reported that the fraud hotline is getting 10 to 15 complaints per day about a scam that involves a technique called “spoofing,” which mimics the Lone Star Card Help Desk in order to collect personal information such as a PIN or a Social Security number.

“There are millions of Texans who need our benefits, and we don’t want them taken advantage of,” said HHSC Access and Eligibility Services Deputy Executive Commissioner Molly Regan. “We know how important these benefits are, so we’re doing all we can to help prevent fraud and make it easy to report it when it happens.”

What’s on the ballot? March 5, 2024 election sample ballots on the High Plains
HHSC officials note that HHSC will never reach out by phone, text, or email to ask clients for their card numbers and PIN, and if a client is concerned about a call regarding their benefits, they should hang up and call the number on the back of the Lone Star Card to confirm it is HHSC calling.

“As the OIG Fraud Hotline identifies new and increasingly sophisticated scams, we want Texans to be able to protect themselves against those attempts to steal their information,” said HHS Inspector General Raymond Charles Winter. “Regardless of what the caller ID says, do not provide any personal information in response to an unsolicited call.”

HHSC officials stated those affected by the Lone Star Card fraud should take immediate action by calling the Lone Star Card Help Desk at 800-777-7328, reporting it to the OIG at 800-436-6184, and contacting their local law enforcement agency.

Those who lost benefits as a result of the scam can request replacement benefits through a local HHSC office. Officials also noted that anyone with an immediate need for food assistance can contact a local food bank or food pantry and can find one in their area by calling 2-1-1 and selecting option 1, or by visiting the 2-1-1 Texas website.

For more information on how to avoid fraud are encouraged to visit the HHS Lone Star Card Fraud Awareness and Prevention website.

Willie Piper Honored for Foster Grandparent Program Service

'Grandma Piper' honored for 50,000 hours mentoring Travis County children in the Foster Grandparent Program

Avery Travis

KXAN-TV

February 29, 2024

After 30 years with the Foster Grandparent Program, a woman fondly known as “Grandma Piper” was honored with state and national awards for her more than 50,000 hours of service mentoring Travis County children.

At the age of 92, Willie Piper is still actively serving and attending court twice a week with kids, serving as moral support for those who have no family present and spending mornings with them before their classes, according to Texas officials

Willie Piper poses with notes from children and several awards for her 30 years of mentorship with the Foster Grandparent Program. (KXAN Photo/Avery Travis)

Notes from children and several awards shown honor 30 years of mentorship by Willie Piper with the Foster Grandparent Program. (KXAN Photo/Avery Travis)

Willie Piper poses with children’s notes and awards for her 30 years of mentorship with the Foster Grandparent Program. (KXAN Photo/Avery Travis)

According to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Piper has helped hundreds of children over the years.

“With a kind and caring attitude, Miss Willie has never slowed down throughout her 30 years of service, even sending cards to the children she volunteered with during the pandemic. She has



made a profound impact on the children, her fellow foster grandparents and the Austin community,” said Diane Rouda, volunteer services coordinator for the Austin program.

In a celebration of her service on Thursday, Piper received the President’s Volunteer Service Award from AmeriCorps, signed by President Joe Biden. The award recognizes people for their “positive and inspiring contributions and impacts on their community and the nation.” She also received two flags that had flown in her honor: one, over the Texas State Capitol, and another, over the United States Capitol in Washington D.C.

However, a blanket featuring handwritten notes from the children she mentors stood out as, perhaps, the biggest honor of all.

“I know ‘thanks’ is a small, six letter word, but it means a lot when it comes from the heart,” Piper told a crowd gathered in one of the courtrooms at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Probation Center.

She described how, in her early days of volunteering, she used to cry every day after hearing stories from these kids. Still, she stuck with the program.

“She has unconditionally showed love to these children,” said Cory Burgess, Travis County’s Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, emphasizing how she “embodied compassion” for the children in their programs.

The Foster Grandparent Program, which operates in counties across Texas, allows older adults to offer one-on-one emotional support, mentoring and tutoring to children in need. [Learn more here.](#)

[**Austin's Willie Piper to Receive Lifetime President's Volunteer Service Award for 30 Years of Mentorship**](#)

Sophie Leclerc
Hoodline News
February 29, 2024

Willie Piper, a stalwart of the Texas Foster Grandparent Program, is set to receive the Lifetime President’s Volunteer Service Award this Thursday for her unwavering commitment over three decades.



Piper, who has racked up more than 50,000 hours assisting children, became a part of the program back in February 1994.

At 92 years young, she continues to serve at the Gardner Betts Juvenile Probation Center, offering a comforting presence in court for those without family, and brightening mornings for the residents there with visits before their classes.

According to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's announcement, Piper's tenure with the Foster Grandparent Program has left a lasting mark on countless young lives.

"Miss Willie has served as a mentor for other volunteers in the Foster Grandparent Program and inspired them to follow her wise counsel," Diane Rouda, the volunteer services coordinator for the Austin Foster Grandparent Program, shared in a statement. "With a kind and caring attitude, Miss Willie has never slowed down throughout her 30 years of service, even sending cards to the children she volunteered with during the pandemic."

The Foster Grandparent Program, supported by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, invites individuals who are 55 and over with limited incomes to mentor and build meaningful relationships with children facing various academic, social, or emotional challenges.

These volunteers, like Piper, not only act as role models but also instill trust and offer unconditional support that could pivot a child's trajectory toward a brighter future.

The Lifetime President's Volunteer Service Award, to be bestowed upon Piper, is an accolade from AmeriCorps acknowledging the extraordinary contributions of volunteers to their communities and the nation at large.

Kerrville State Hospital to Learn Historic Background

[Historical commission will learn background of Kerrville State Hospital](#)

Kerrville Daily Times

February 16, 2024

Mark Mosty, retired psychologist, will present a program on "The History of Kerrville State Hospital" at the February meeting of the Kerr County Historical Commission. The site of the current hospital served as a state tuberculosis hospital for black patients from 1936 to 1948.

The meeting begins at noon Monday, Feb. 19, at the Union Church Building, 101 Travis St. in Kerrville. Meetings are open to the public, and visitors are welcome.

The Kerr County Historical Commission was organized in October 1975 and is a part of Kerr County government, operating with residents appointed by the Kerr County Commissioners Court. The work of the commission focuses on preservation of the historical heritage of the



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county: identifying historical buildings, sites or cemeteries, and recording and explaining information regarding the history of the county.