Scam artists relentlessly prey on the elder population. Why do they target this group? In many cases, this “Greatest Generation” expects honesty from people. But scam artists are charismatic, pushy and threatening. Anyone can be a victim. Here are a few tips that can help identify red flags to avoid being a victim of fraud:

• Never do business with someone who calls out of the blue. Simply say, “I do not take solicitor calls. Please remove me from your list.” Hang up.
• Know that the IRS does not call people, they send letters.
• If you receive a call that your loved one is in trouble and needs money, try to get a hold of him or her first.
• Never hire someone who shows up at your door offering home repairs. Many of these unsolicited companies overcharge, may be unlicensed or uninsured, produce shoddy work, or demand money up front.

Technology scams are increasing. These calls could come from a blocked or international number and claim to be a technician from Microsoft or another well-known brand. These companies do not do solicitation calls.

• Identify theft comes in many forms. It might be a caller claiming they are from Medicare, your bank, or your insurance company. Never release personal information over the phone (credit card, social security number, account numbers, etc.).
• Many scams against older people go unreported because the victims are embarrassed and. If you are the child of someone who has been scammed, it is important to avoid shame and blame. Your parent may become less likely to share information with you in the future.

At Independence Hill Retirement Community we are all about making sure our residents lead an independent lifestyle while still being aware of the possibility of fraud. Alan Holfinger, our Director of Safety and Night Management, routinely addresses current scams in his monthly Safety Meetings and brings in speakers to keep residents well informed.

Join us at 10:00 a.m. on November 3 for a “Tips to Protect Yourself from Fraud” seminar with Bexar County District Attorney Elder Fraud Prosecutor. Also, on October 3 at 10:00 a.m., a Medicare expert will share the latest information on Medicare coverages. Keep the upper hand, stay informed! RSVP to (210) 209-8956 or visit www.independencehill.com today.

Independence Hill Retirement Resort Community is located at 20450 Huebner Rd., San Antonio, TX 78258. For more information, call (210) 209-8956 or visit www.independencehill.com.