



# OBSERVING NATIONAL CRIME PREVENTION MONTH

by Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott

EACH OCTOBER, NATIONAL CRIME Prevention Month encourages communities across the country to renew their focus on crime prevention. The Office of the Attorney General (OAG) is committed to working with law enforcement officials across the state to keep Texas communities safe, so each October we take advantage of Crime Prevention Month to renew our focus on this worthy endeavor of protecting our fellow Texans.

Law enforcement cannot do it alone, however. Citizens who are vigilant and active in their communities are crucial partners in the fight against crime. To help foster a well-informed citizenry, OAG staff members help lead seminars for consumer and senior groups, participate in law enforcement expos and speak at conferences across the state. Our experienced professionals are well-versed on a wide array of topics, including identity theft, fraud, and scams against seniors, to name a few. Law enforcement associations and consumer advocacy groups may schedule an outreach event by contacting our director of outreach, **Ben Taylor**, at **(512) 936-1864** or by email at **Ben.Taylor@texasattorneygeneral.gov**.

Collaborative law enforcement is

also a crucial component of crime prevention. The OAG works closely with city, county and federal law enforcement officials to crack down on dangerous child predators and keep Texas neighborhoods safe for our children. The OAG's Cyber Crimes and Fugitive Units, which locate sex offenders who have violated the terms of their parole, have combined to make more than 3,500 arrests. OAG peace officers have also helped educate parents and educators about cyber safety by offering tips, training and other valuable resources through our website: [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov).

Our Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) works closely with local, state and federal law enforcement officials to protect nursing home patients from physical abuse, neglect and financial exploitation. Texas taxpayers spend more than \$17 billion on the Medicaid program each year, so we also investigate Medicaid providers who defraud the taxpayers by submitting reimbursement requests for goods and services that were never actually rendered. Texans can report waste, abuse or fraud by a Medicaid provider by contacting the MFCU at (512) 463-2011.

The OAG is also committed to

cracking down on identity theft. Our consumer and senior alerts and proactive outreach programs help warn Texans about fraudulent sweepstakes offers, foreign "lotteries" and identity theft schemes. Texans who fall victim to identity theft can use the OAG's ID Theft Kit to help speed the recovery process. The kit, which is available for download on our website, includes forms and agency contact information that can help victims restore their credit and prevent further damage to their good name.

In order for the criminal justice system to hold wrongdoers accountable, it's often important for crime victims to help law enforcement identify and prosecute the perpetrators of the crime. To help assist victims and encourage them to actively participate in the criminal justice system, the OAG's Crime Victim Services Division administers the Compensation to Victims of Crime Fund – which helps victims and their families cover the cost of health care, counseling and expenses associated with violent crime when they have no other means of paying these costs.

The OAG also partners with crime victim advocates and nonprofit

organizations across Texas who walk victims through the recovery process. With the CVC Fund facing a significant budgetary shortage, we are working closely with these organizations and with leaders in the Texas Legislature to ensure that critical funding for victim assistance and crime victim services grants is resolved during the next legislative session. Together, we can help crime victims receive the counseling, emergency shelter, health care and financial assistance they need to recover and thrive in the future.

From partnering with nonprofit organizations like Texas CASA Inc., Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas and the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault to conducting joint operations with local law enforcement authorities, the OAG has demonstrated that collaboration and coordination are critical to maintaining an effective, efficient criminal justice system. National Crime Prevention Month helps remind all Texans that they, too, can join our fight. Together, we can help foster a safer, more productive Texas for generations to come.

- October 2012