

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Department of Aging Encourages Older Adults to Prepare for the Transition to 5G Cellular Service**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Pennsylvania Department of Aging is reminding seniors with older devices to learn about the potential impacts related to the shutdown of the 3G network service and prepare accordingly. The shutdown involves the nation's three major wireless carriers and could occur as soon as this month.

As the 3G network retires, individuals will not be able to make or receive calls and text messages or use data services on their older phones. The shutdown could also impact other devices that rely on 3G connectivity, including medical alert devices, tablets, home security systems, and roadside assistance systems.

"Many seniors utilize their cell phones and tablets for entertainment and to stay connected with family and friends. These devices and others are also lifesavers, and they can make a difference when seconds count," said Secretary of Aging Robert Torres. "I urge older adults to learn the status of their device's connectivity before it shuts down on them unexpectedly and to find out what actions their carriers may be taking to help them with making a smooth transition to the 5G network."

The carriers are directly notifying users of the devices that utilize the 3G network to inform them if the discontinuation impacts them. However, seniors with older phones that they use only to contact 911 for emergencies may not receive a notification if they do not have active service with a carrier.

Mobile service providers may be offering older adults special deals on new devices, including some deals that may include a new phone. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) may be able to assist older adults with switching to a new device using either of its two programs:

- The Lifeline Program provides a discount on phone service for qualifying low-income consumers. More information, including eligibility, how to apply and participating providers can be found [here](#).
- The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program provides a temporary discount of up to \$50 per month towards broadband service for eligible households during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information, including eligibility and what it covers is [here](#).

Additional information about the transition to 5G can be found on the [FCC's website](#).

Learn more about the various programs offered by the Pennsylvania Department of Aging [here](#) and on the Department of Aging's [Facebook page](#).