

# THE STATE CENTER CONSUMER PROTECTION REPORT

May 2017

## About the State Center Consumer Protection Report

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*The Center for State Enforcement of Antitrust and Consumer Protection Laws* ("State Center") is pleased to present the latest edition of the State Center Consumer Protection Report ("Consumer Protection Report") Published in partnership with [StateAG.org](http://StateAG.org), the Consumer Protection Report is a monthly compilation of state attorney general press releases on local and national consumer protection efforts, including investigations, court cases, consumer alerts and advocacy initiatives. It makes no effort to prioritize, analyze or comment on the information presented in the press releases and their potential impact on consumers.

The Consumer Protection Report relies solely and exclusively on state attorney general press releases, and thus is not an exhaustive representation of state attorney general consumer protection activity.

The Consumer Protection Report is produced through the State Center's State AG Consumer Protection Initiative: a website featuring all current and previous editions of the Report, and a [database](#), allowing visitors to conduct key-word and drop-down menu searches of all previous editions.

- *For more information on the State AG Consumer Protection Initiative, please visit our website: [www.statecenterinc.org/cpi-newsletter](http://www.statecenterinc.org/cpi-newsletter).*
- *If an office would like their consumer protection activity included in subsequent newsletters, please contact us.*
- **Newsletter sign up:** *To sign up for the monthly Consumer Protection Report, please sign up [here](#).*



**For more information about the State Center and StateAG.org, please visit our websites:**

State Center: <http://www.statecenterinc.org>

StateAG.org: [www.stateag.org](http://www.stateag.org)

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## Consumer Protection Cases

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### ALABAMA

May 12, 2017

#### **AG MARSHALL ANNOUNCES ACTION TO STOP TECH SUPPORT SCAMMER IN PART OF MAJOR NATIONAL OPERATION**

(MONTGOMERY)—Attorney General Steve Marshall announced the State of Alabama and the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have obtained an order temporarily halting a technical support scam that tricked consumers into believing their computers were infected with viruses and malware, and then charged them hundreds of dollars for unnecessary repairs. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1063>

May 05, 2017

#### **AG MARSHALL ANNOUNCES ARREST FOR THEFT OF MORE THAN \$38,000 BY SHELBY COUNTY WOMAN WHO CLAIMED TO BE DYING AND FRAUDULENTLY SOLICITED DONATIONS**

(MONTGOMERY)--Attorney General Steven T. Marshall announced the arrest yesterday of a Shelby County woman for two counts of first-degree theft by deception of at least \$38,000. Jennifer Flynn Cataldo, 37, of Sterrett, was arrested and taken to the Shelby County Jail, with a \$50,000 bond on each count.

The joint federal and state investigation is continuing, and the Attorney General's Office urges anyone with information or who may be a possible victim of Cataldo to contact the Criminal Trials Division by calling 334-353-1875. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1058>

May 02, 2017

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL STEVEN T. MARSHALL, JOINED BY SOUTHSIDE CHIEF OF POLICE CHRIS JONES, ETOWAH COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY JODY WILLOUGHBY AND U.S. SECRET SERVICE, ANNOUNCE ARREST AND ARREST WARRANT IN DEBIT CARD SKIMMING OPERATION AFFECTING ALABAMA AND THREE**

(MONTGOMERY) – Alabama Attorney General Steven T. Marshall joined Southside Chief of Police Chris Jones, Etowah County District Attorney Jody Willoughby and U.S. Secret Service Special Agent in Charge Michael Williams in announcing Tuesday an arrest and an arrest warrant for an additional suspect in a multi-state debit card skimming operation that stole over \$43,000 from debit card holders in Alabama and three other states. Seven banks and more than 300 individuals in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Colorado are believed to have been victimized by the skimmers. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-1054>

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## ALASKA

May 02, 2017

### **Attorney General Approves Sale of Tesoro Fuel Terminal to Petro Star**

(Anchorage, AK) – Tesoro Alaska Petroleum Company has entered a purchase and sale agreement that will transfer ownership of Tesoro’s Terminal 1 at the Port of Anchorage to Petro Star, Inc. The State of Alaska required the sale of Terminal 1 in order to preserve competition in Alaska’s fuel market. The State imposed the requirement as part of a consent decree entered between the State and Tesoro when Tesoro sought to purchase most of Flint Hill’s fuel storage assets in Anchorage and Fairbanks. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.law.state.ak.us/press/releases/2017/050217-Tesoro.html>

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## ARIZONA

May 11, 2017

### **Deadline to Get Out of Timeshare Agreement Approaching**

PHOENIX – The deadline is quickly approaching for Arizonans to be released from their Diamond Resorts timeshare agreement. The Timeshare Relinquishment Remedy program is part of an \$800,000 consumer fraud settlement between Diamond Resorts Corporation and the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

The settlement is the result of an Arizona Attorney General's Office consumer fraud investigation after hundreds of consumers alleged Diamond Resorts used deceptive sales practices during timeshare sales presentations. Diamond Resorts operates timeshare properties in more than 350 locations all across the country and the world, including resorts in Sedona, Scottsdale, and Pinetop. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/deadline-get-out-timeshare-agreement-approaching>

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## CALIFORNIA

May 11, 2017

### **Attorney General Becerra Announces Approval of \$66M for California in Settlement with Volkswagen**

SACRAMENTO – This morning, Judge Charles Breyer of the United States District Court for Northern District of California approved a \$250 million settlement with Volkswagen over its “defeat device” software to bypass emissions controls in its 3.0 liter diesel vehicles. The settlement was negotiated by attorneys and technical experts from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Justice, California Air Resources Board (CARB), and California Attorney General's Office. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-announces-approval-66m-california-settlement-volkswagen>

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## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 23, 2017

### **Attorney General Racine Obtains Settlement against Company That Falsely Claimed to Eliminate Debt**

WASHINGTON, D. C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Office of Consumer Protection has obtained a settlement with a consent judgment against Burlington Financial Group, LLC (Burlington) and its owner and manager, Sang Yi, for falsely promising to reduce or eliminate debt for consumers.

The Maryland-based Burlington is an example of a company that promised debt-reduction assistance for consumers and charged fees while only providing services that consumers could procure for free elsewhere. In return for their services, Burlington Financial Group and Sang Yi charged significant fees. For example, one District consumer agreed to make installment payments to Burlington totaling an eye-popping \$30,089.70. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-obtains-settlement-against-company-falsely-claimed-eliminate-debt>

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## FLORIDA

May 25, 2017

### **Attorney General Bondi Files Action to Stop Debt Relief Scam**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Office filed legal action to stop an alleged student loan relieve scam. According to the complaint, Strategic Student Solutions LLC and the owner Dave Green induced consumers to use the company’s phony student loan debt relief services by falsely claiming to be able to assist in substantially reducing or complete forgiveness of student loan debt. Strategic allegedly bilked these unsuspecting consumers out of thousands of dollars. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/4756C8BFAC10E3628525812B00736A42>

May 23, 2017

### **Attorney General Bondi and FTC Halt Massive Debt Relief Scam**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Federal Trade Commission have jointly obtained a court order halting a massive phony debt relief operation that bilked millions of dollars from financially strapped consumers, including the elderly and disabled. According to the complaint filed by Attorney General Bondi’s Office and the FTC, Jeremy Lee Marcus, Craig Davis Smith and Yisbet Segrea, through 11 companies, convinced consumers to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars a month by falsely promising to pay, settle or obtain dismissals of consumers’ debts and improve consumers’ credit. After paying for the defendants’ services, consumers allegedly found debts unpaid, accounts in default and credit scores severely



damaged. The scam even forced some victims into bankruptcy and some consumers were sued by their creditors. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/81E241D8E2921C5F85258129006DE582>

May 12, 2017

**Attorney General Bondi Continues Efforts to Shut Down Tech Scams**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today announced the filing of three complaints, including one filed jointly with the Federal Trade Commission, against companies allegedly involved in the operation of tech support scams. Tech support scams trick consumers into believing their computers are infected with viruses and malware in an effort to bilk users out of hundreds of dollars. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/93E45FCE4E10B67E8525811E0058CA2C>

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## HAWAII

May 31, 2017

**STATE OF HAWAII RECEIVES \$2.5 MILLION PAYMENT FROM VOLKSWAGEN**

HONOLULU – Attorney General Doug Chin and Office of Consumer Protection Executive Director Stephen Levins today announced that the State of Hawaii has received a \$2.5 million direct payment from Volkswagen. The payment is part of a multistate settlement involving claims that the car manufacturer violated state consumer protection laws prohibiting unfair or deceptive trade practices by marketing, selling, and leasing diesel vehicles equipped with illegal and undisclosed defeat device software.

2.0 liter diesel engine settlements

On June 28, 2016, 43 states and jurisdictions announced a coordinated settlement to resolve state claims against Volkswagen AG, Audi AG, Volkswagen Group of America, Inc., Porsche AG, and Porsche Cars, North America, Inc. – collectively referred to as Volkswagen. This partial settlement covered vehicles equipped with 2.0-liter diesel engines, including the VW ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/News-Release-2017-56.pdf>

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## ILLINOIS

May 04, 2017

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SUES CHICAGO-BASED PYRAMID SCHEME**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit and temporary restraining order against a Chicago-based pyramid sales operation after receiving more than 20 complaints about

its false and misleading claims that lured people into the costly scheme.

Madigan filed the lawsuit in Cook County against Wealth Partners Publishing Inc. (WPP) and its President Candice V. Cunningham for operating a direct-mail pyramid scheme called “Partners in Profit” that falsely promised people they could build direct mail businesses to earn a quick and lifelong income. In filing the lawsuit, Madigan also filed a motion for a temporary restraining order and an order preserving assets to immediately prohibit Cunningham and WPP from continuing to operate the scheme in Illinois. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170504c.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170504c.html)

May 04, 2017

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN SETTLES WITH PREPAID WIRELESS SERVICE**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a settlement with wireless phone company, PlatumTel Communications (PTEL), after it abruptly shut down and failed to pay money it owed to customers for wireless services. The settlement will allow consumers to obtain refunds for unused wireless services.

In January 2016, PTEL, which advertised prepaid, no-contract wireless services, notified customers that the company would be going out of business and they would no longer be able to use services. Customers who complained to PTEL and requested refunds for prepaid services were told that all services were nonrefundable and nontransferable. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170504.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170504.html)

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## IOWA

May 31, 2017

### **Judge Bars Osmosis Defendants from Selling Drinkable Sunscreen and other “Harmonized Water” Products in Iowa during Pending Consumer Fraud Lawsuit**

(DES MOINES) An Iowa judge has ordered the Colorado makers of “drinkable sunscreen” and other so-called “harmonized water” products to stop selling them to Iowans while a consumer fraud lawsuit filed by Attorney General Tom Miller is pending.

In a preliminary injunction filed in Polk County District Court, District Court Judge Scott D. Rosenberg ordered Osmosis LLC, Harmonized Water LLC, and Benjamin Taylor Johnson, to refrain from selling the company’s harmonized water products to Iowans until Miller’s lawsuit, filed March 14, is resolved. The preliminary injunction followed an evidentiary hearing earlier this month at which Johnson testified. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/judge-bars-osmosis-defendants-from-selling-drinkable-sunscreen-and-other-harmonized-water-products/>

May 24, 2017

### **Iowa Company Agrees to Stop High School Sports Promotions Sales**

DES MOINES – A Davenport company that allegedly duped businesses into paying for promotional advertising by misrepresenting ties to local high school sports teams has agreed to shut down its promotions business through an agreement with Attorney General Tom Miller. The agreement, through an assurance of voluntary compliance, bars Champion Posters LLC, also doing business as Varsity Promotions and Consumer Enterprises LLC, and owner James D. Shannon, from soliciting future promotional business or producing promotional products in or from Iowa. The company's business included marketing high school promotional sports posters. More than 30 complaints filed with the Consumer Protection Division—largely from small businesses—alleged Champion Posters and/or Varsity Promotions made various misrepresentations in soliciting, producing and distributing sports posters. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/iowa-company-agrees-to-stop-high-school-sports-promotions-sales/>

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## KANSAS

May 26, 2017

### **AG Derek Schmidt: New York debt collector banned from doing business in Kansas**

TOPEKA – (May 26, 2017) – A New York-based debt collector has been banned from debt collection or enforcement in Kansas, Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today. In a lawsuit filed in Shawnee County District Court, Schmidt accused Jacobs Marsh, LLC, and its owner Joseph Arena, of Williamsville, N.Y., of unlawfully pursuing collections and filing lawsuits, representing themselves as having authority, and committing deceptive and unconscionable acts and practices. In a consent judgment approved last week by Judge Teresa Watson, the company was ordered to cease doing business in Kansas, dismiss all of the approximately 140 lawsuits it has filed in the state in which judgment has not been granted, and file Satisfactions of Judgment in those lawsuits that have resulted in judgment in their favor. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/05/26/ag-derek-schmidt-new-york-debt-collector-banned-from-doing-business-in-kansas>

May 15, 2017

### **AG Derek Schmidt sues Georgia company for failing to protect nursing home patients' personal information**

TOPEKA – (May 15, 2017) –A Georgia company that had operated a nursing home in Humboldt violated Kansas law by failing to secure or properly dispose of patient records containing personal information, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said in a lawsuit filed last week. The attorney general filed suit against a Georgia company that had operated a nursing home in Humboldt. That nursing home is now closed. The filing in Allen County District Court alleges that Alta Care Corporation, d/b/a Pinecrest Nursing Home; Doug Mittleider, the owner and

operator of Pinecrest Nursing Home; and Florida Senior Housing Council, Inc., which owns the building, were aware that patient and employee records were contained unsecured in the building which used to operate as Pinecrest Nursing Home. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/05/15/ag-derek-schmidt-sues-georgia-company-for-failing-to-protect-nursing-home-patients-personal-information>

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## KENTUCKY

May 10, 2017

### **Beshear: Action Taken Against Several Kentucky Fitness Centers**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 10, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear announced today that his office is better protecting Kentuckians by holding several fitness centers in Kentucky accountable for failing to properly register with his office.

By law, fitness centers or gyms, spelled out in statute as “health spas,” are required to file an annual registration statement with the Office of the Attorney General, and post a bond, if they charge an initiation fee or have pre-paid memberships. Each bond amount is based on the number of memberships. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=319>

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## MARYLAND

May 24, 2017

### **Governor Hogan, Attorney General Frosh Announce Proceeds from Mallinckrodt**

BALTIMORE, MD (May 24, 2017) –Governor Larry Hogan and Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that proceeds from the settlement of a lawsuit against Mallinckrodt ARD, Inc. will be used to fund critical research at Johns Hopkins and the University of Maryland, Baltimore. In January 2017, Attorney General Frosh announced Maryland, three other states and the Federal Trade Commission had reached a \$100 million settlement of a lawsuit against Mallinckrodt ARD, formerly known as Questcor Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Mallinckrodt PLC, for allegedly monopolizing the market for a lifesaving medication, Acthar, a therapeutic medication used to treat certain life-threatening diseases, including infantile spasms, a rare but devastating neurological disease; nephrotic syndrome, a kidney disorder; and multiple sclerosis. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/052417a.pdf>

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## MASSACHUSETTS

May 25, 2017

### **AG Obtains Judgment Voiding Hundreds of Illegal Loans to Massachusetts Consumers in Case Against Online Auto Title Lender**

BOSTON – Hundreds of illegal loans made to Massachusetts consumers by an unlicensed online

auto title lender are now void pursuant to a judgment announced today by Attorney General Maura Healey. The company has also been permanently barred from operating in Massachusetts, and liens they placed on vehicles have been dissolved with new titles issued to consumers.

The final judgment and permanent injunction entered in Suffolk Superior Court against Liquidation, LLC (Liquidation) permanently bars the company from advertising, soliciting, selling or assigning any loans in Massachusetts and from collecting on any of those loans already made to consumers. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-05-25-voiding-hundreds-of-illegal-loans.html>

May 18, 2017

### **Closed South Hadley Funeral Home to Pay Nearly \$500,000 in Restitution for Mishandling Human Remains, Misappropriating Consumer Deposits**

NORTHAMPTON – A closed South Hadley funeral home and its former director will pay nearly \$500,000 in restitution after improperly handling human remains and misappropriating deposits intended for funeral arrangements, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today. The defendants are also permanently prohibited from participating in the funeral business. “We expect all funeral service providers to operate with respect for the deceased and their families,” said AG Healey. “It is intolerable that any provider would take advantage of the trust placed in them by grieving families.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-05-18-closed-south-hadley-funeral-home-to-pay-500000.html>

May 15, 2017

### **Three Construction Companies Cited More Than \$600,000 for Failing to Properly Pay Workers on Public Projects**

BOSTON – Three Massachusetts construction companies have been cited more than \$600,000 in total in restitution and penalties for failing to pay the proper prevailing wage rate to employees for work performed on public projects as well as other violations of state wage laws, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today. The AG’s Office issued citations against Ronan Jarvis, former owner of MC Starr Companies Inc., DANCO Management, Inc., and its owner, Daniel Tremblay, and R&A Drywall, LLC and owner Allan S. Vitale. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-05-15-construction-companies-cited-600000.html>

May 04, 2017

### **Former Real Estate Agent in Boston Charged in Connection With Multiple Schemes to Steal Money for Personal Use**

BOSTON – A former Boston-based real estate agent has been charged in connection with stealing more than \$166,000 from 19 individuals, including his co-workers and acquaintances, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Dale Murawski, age 42, formerly of Boston and most recently residing in New Jersey, was arraigned yesterday in Suffolk Superior Court on the charges of Larceny Over \$250 (18 counts). Murawski pleaded not guilty to the charges. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-05-04-former-real-estate-agent-schemes-to-steal-money.html>

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## MICHIGAN

May 22, 2017

### **Schuette Charges Macomb County Insurance Agent with Embezzling over \$800,000 from Southeast Michigan Seniors**

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette announced his Corporate Oversight Division has filed charges against Paul Garceau, 51, of Grosse Pointe Park, that include Embezzlement and Conducting a Criminal Enterprise, for allegedly stealing money from unsuspecting seniors in a Ponzi scheme.

“These charges are a step toward justice for those who trusted Mr. Garceau with managing their money,” said Schuette. “Individuals who take advantage of their relationships and conspire to exploit the elderly for personal financial gain will face the consequences and it should serve as a reminder that this type of criminal activity will not be tolerated.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849\\_47203-412649--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-412649--,00.html)

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## MINNESOTA

May 15, 2017

### **Unlicensed Debt Collection Company Barred from Collecting Debt in Minnesota After Aggressively Pursuing People for Fake Payday Loans**

Attorney General Lori Swanson obtained a judgment in April, 2017 against Global Gateway Solutions, Inc., which used call centers in Jamaica to make unlicensed collection calls attempting to collect fake payday loan debts—or “phantom” debts—from Minnesotans who did not owe them. The judgment permanently bans Global Gateway from collecting debt in Minnesota and requires the company to pay a civil penalty and restitution to Minnesota residents from whom it collected payments on fake debts. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20170515\\_GlobalGateway.asp](https://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20170515_GlobalGateway.asp)

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## MISSOURI

May 25, 2017

### **AG Hawley Announces Suit Against Fake Law Enforcement Memorial**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Josh Hawley today announced that his office filed a lawsuit in St. Francois County Circuit Court against Terry R. Lemons of Farmington, Missouri alleging that Lemons misled donors when soliciting donations for a memorial to honor fallen law enforcement officers.

“We will aggressively pursue those who take advantage of Missourians generosity, especially when they dishonor law enforcement officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their communities,” said Hawley. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-suit-against-fake-law-enforcement-memorial>

May 03, 2017

### **AG Hawley Announces Suit Against Deceitful Charitable Organization**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Earlier today, Attorney General Joshua Hawley filed a lawsuit in the St. Charles County Circuit Court against Harold Hogarth and Gold Star College For Kids Foundation, Inc., alleging that Hogarth fraudulently took money that had been donated to provide scholarships to families of service-members killed in action. Such families are known as Gold Star families.

“We will aggressively pursue those who take advantage of Missourians generosity, especially when they dishonor the memories and families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country,” said Hawley. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-suit-against-deceitful-charitable-organization>

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE

May 05, 2017

### **Gerard Michael Healey dba Mike's Home Improvement of Meredith, NH cited for violations of the consumer protection act.**

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announced today his office has brought an enforcement action under the Consumer Protection Act against Gerard Michael Healy, the owner of Mike's Home Improvement, of Meredith, New Hampshire for unfair and deceptive trade practices related to his home improvement business. Specifically, the Attorney General alleges that Mr. Healy took deposits from consumers for various home improvement projects then failed to perform the services or refund the deposits. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170504-gerard-michael-healy.htm>

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## NEW JERSEY

May 25, 2017

### **New Jersey Bureau of Securities Obtains \$650,000 Payment in Agreement with David Lerner Associates, Inc. to Resolve Violations Relating to Sales of Non-Traded REITs**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that David Lerner Associates, Inc. (DLA), a New York firm with offices in Princeton and Teaneck, has agreed to pay \$650,000 to resolve a Bureau of Securities investigation into its sales of non-traded real estate investment trusts (REITs) in New Jersey.

In a Consent Order with the Bureau, the Syosset NY-based DLA, agreed to pay civil penalties and other costs to resolve the Bureau’s findings that agents of the firm sold non-traded REITs to unsuitable investors, that DLA supervisors approved those sales, and that the firm failed to make and keep adequate records for sales of non-traded REITs. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170525b.html>

May 24, 2017

### **Medical License of Burlington County Psychiatrist Suspended for Prescribing Massive Doses of Opioids While Not Abiding by Prescription Monitoring Program Regulations**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that the State Board of Medical Examiners has temporarily suspended the medical license of a Burlington County psychiatrist who allegedly prescribed tens of thousands of dosage units of opioids to two patients while not abiding by the mandatory Prescription Monitoring Program (“PMP”) lookup provision for chronic pain prescribing.

Dr. Joel B. Glass, who had a practice in Marlton, has been ordered by the Board to turn over his medical license, his federal Drug Enforcement Administration and his New Jersey Controlled Dangerous Substances registrations, and to cease practicing medicine and writing prescriptions. Glass’ case is the first in which the Board has cited a physician for violating the PMP’s regulations concerning mandatory lookups. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170524b.html>

May 22, 2017

### **As Ramadan Approaches, New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Enforces Regulations Protecting the Halal-Buying Public**

NEWARK – As the holy month of Ramadan approaches, Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino today announced that the Division of Consumer Affairs has issued Notices of Violation (“NOVs”) against 15 businesses for allegedly failing to properly disclose practices relating to the preparation, handling, and sale of food sold or served as halal, as required by the state’s Halal Food Consumer Protection Act (“HFCA”) and the Halal Food Regulations.

The use of halal foods – i.e., those permitted by Islamic dietary rules – is centrally important to Muslim’s celebrating the religious holiday of Ramadan, which begins on or about May 26 this



year. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170522a.html>

May 17, 2017

### **Two Suspended Newark Lawyers Indicted on Charges They Stole Over \$140,000 From Clients of Their Law Firm**

TRENTON –Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino announced that two suspended lawyers who formerly operated a Newark law firm as partners were indicted today by a state grand jury on charges that they stole more than \$140,000 from clients of the firm.

The Division of Criminal Justice obtained an indictment charging Richard M. Roberts, 79, of Bloomfield, N.J., and Gerald M. Saluti Jr., 49, of Howell, N.J., with conspiracy (2nd degree), theft by failure make required disposition of property received (2nd degree), hindering apprehension or prosecution (3rd degree), and perjury (3rd degree). ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170517b.html>

May 05, 2017

### **Attorney General Porrino and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs File Complaint to Stop Monmouth County Man From Illegally Practicing Medicine Without a License**

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs have filed a complaint seeking to bar a Monmouth County man from engaging in the unlicensed practice of medicine.

The complaint was filed in Superior Court in Monmouth County against Raymond Salani, Jr., who represented himself as the sole owner of Lifestyles Medical LLC in West Long Branch. Salani, the complaint alleges, had been treating patients and writing out prescriptions despite never having possessed a license to practice medicine in New Jersey. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170505c.html>

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## NEW YORK

May 22, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Tech Company Over Sale Of Insecure Bluetooth Door And Padlocks**

NEW YORK - Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has reached a settlement with Safetech Products LLC and its owner Ryan Hyde over the sale of insecure wireless door and padlocks. The company, based in Lehi, Utah, sells Bluetooth-enabled door and padlocks via Amazon and the company's online retail site and claims to guarantee users the ability to protect personal belongings inside the home by turning doors and closets into secure areas. However, last year, a group of independent security researchers discovered that Safetech's locks failed to secure passwords and other security information required for operation—leaving consumers susceptible to hacking and theft. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-tech-company-over-sale-insecure-bluetooth-door>

May 18, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Buffalo Landlord To Protect University Heights Quality Of Life**

BUFFALO – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a consent decree with Jeremy Dunn, a prominent landlord who owns and controls dozens of properties on Winspear Avenue and Northrup Place in the University Heights, a residential neighborhood in the City of Buffalo. Dunn's properties are notorious for hosting dangerous house parties and undermining quality of life for the entire neighborhood. The Attorney General's settlement requires Dunn to properly screen his tenants, place extensive limits on the parties at his properties, regularly inspect and clean up the properties, obtain certificates of occupancy, make necessary repairs, and take other steps to improve neighborhood quality of life. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-buffalo-landlord-protect-university-heights>

May 18, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Buffalo Landlords To Fix Lead-Based Paint Hazards**

BUFFALO – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that he reached a settlement with two Buffalo-area property owners to address lead-based paint hazards in two Buffalo apartment complexes, Elmwood Anderson Apartments (33 units) located at Anderson Place and Elmwood Ave and owned by Anderson Apartments LLC; and the Lafayette-Barton Apartments (36 units) located at Lafayette Avenue and Barton Street and owned by Lafayette Barton Apartments LLC. The two apartment complexes have a history of property violations issued by the Erie County Department of Health and the City of Buffalo. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-buffalo-landlords-fix-lead-based-paint-hazards>

May 11, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces \$4.19 Million In Settlements With Six Companies That Illegally Purchased And Resold Hundreds Of Thousands Of Tickets To Concerts And Other NY Events**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced settlements with six ticket brokers that illegally purchased and resold hundreds of thousands of tickets in New York State since 2011, including on popular ticket resale platforms like StubHub and Vivid Seats. Five of the companies – Renaissance Ventures, LLC (d/b/a Prestige Entertainment) of Connecticut, Ebrani Corp (d/b/a Presidential Tickets) of New York, Concert Specials, Inc. of New York, Fanfetch Inc. of New York and BMC Capital Partners, Inc. of New York – violated New York's ticket laws by using illegal software (known as ticket "bots") to purchase large numbers of tickets on websites such as Ticketmaster.com before the tickets could be obtained by

consumers. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-419-million-settlements-six-companies-illegally-purchased>

May 10, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Secures Judgment Against Morrisonville Cab Operator For Deceptive And Exploitative Practices Targeting Refugees Fleeing The U.S.**

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a court judgment against Northern Taxi and its owner and operator, Christopher Crowningshield, for repeatedly violating state and local laws as he took advantage of refugees fleeing the United States by charging as much as \$300 or more for a taxi ride from Plattsburgh to Canadian border, normally a \$50 to \$75 fare. Crowningshield is required by the order to make changes in Northern Taxi's business practices to ensure that all customers are quoted fares ahead of time and are not overcharged for trips to the border. He also must pay the Attorney General \$2,500 in penalties and costs. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-secures-judgment-against-morrisonville-cab-operator-deceptive-and>

May 10, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Virginia Developer For Violating Servicemembers Civil Relief Act**

WATERTOWN – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement with LeRay 300, LLC, a Virginia-based company that operates a community of 150 duplex-style townhomes near Fort Drum. The housing complex is known locally as the Woodcliff Community. With close proximity to Fort Drum, the business actively markets its housing to servicemembers and their families. The settlement concludes an investigation into several Woodcliff business practices, including charging unlawful fees to servicemembers who terminated their leases early pursuant to the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, and using a lease agreement with numerous unconscionable provisions that violated New York State law. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-virginia-developer-violating-servicemembers-civil>

May 09, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Indictment Of Albany Man For Allegedly Running Investment Fraud Scheme To Pay Restitution, Attorney's Fees For His Other Criminal Cases**

ALBANY – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced the arraignment of David A. Mazzeo, 58, of Guilderland, New York, and Michael C. Caruso, 61, of Schenectady, New York, on a 9-count indictment charging them with fraudulently obtaining nearly \$150,000 from multiple individuals to pay attorney's fees and court-ordered restitution for Mazzeo's prior crimes. The pair were also charged with allegedly laundering the money through a First Niagara bank account in Caruso's name, in order to conceal the source of the ill-gotten gains.

“Defrauding consumers in order to pay off one’s prior scam victims shows a blatant disregard for the law, with no remorse,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-indictment-albany-man-allegedly-running-investment-fraud>

May 04, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces \$225K Settlement With Lower East Side Landlord For Harassing Rent-Stabilized Tenants**

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement agreement with several companies controlled by Sassan “Sami” Mahfar and Sina Mahfar, which own or owned four residential buildings: 22 Spring Street, 102 Norfolk Street, 113 Stanton Street, and 210 Rivington Street, on New York City’s Lower East Side. These companies employed several illegal methods to harass rent-regulated tenants, including engaging in construction work that put dangerous amounts of lead into the air, failing to provide essential services such as heat and hot water, and hiring a “relocator” company that used illegal tactics in seeking buyouts from tenants. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-225k-settlement-lower-east-side-landlord-harassing-rent>

May 02, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Lawsuit Against Albany Resident Operating NYS Prisoner Assistance Center For Allegedly Practicing Law Without A License**

ALBANY — Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced a lawsuit filed in Albany County Supreme Court yesterday against NYSPAC, Inc., operating as the NYS Prisoner Assistance Center or NY Parole Aids, and its owner, Mario Vredenburg a/k/a Antonia Barrone, a convicted felon who has spent time in state prison, for bilking countless New Yorkers, including prison inmates and their families, of thousands of dollars to handle administrative parole appeals and other legal matters that they are unqualified, and unlicensed, to perform. The lawsuit alleges that Vredenburg, operating the business from home, duped numerous consumers by falsely claiming to be an attorney, and misrepresenting that the NYS Prisoner Assistance Center was staffed with attorneys. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-lawsuit-against-albany-resident-operating-nys-prisoner>

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## NORTH CAROLINA

May 08, 2017

### **AG Stein Protects Consumers from Predatory Loans**

RALEIGH – Attorney General Josh Stein announced today that the Department of Justice has resolved a lawsuit against predatory auto title lenders in North Carolina. Liquidation, LLC made illegal loans to more than 700 North Carolinians under many names and charged interest rates

of 161 percent to 571 percent, which far exceed legal limits in North Carolina. Loan amounts ranged from \$800 to \$7,000.

“Law-breaking lenders can wreak havoc on a person’s credit and cause financially-strapped people to get even further behind,” said AG Stein. “My office will not allow predatory lenders to take advantage of consumers in this state. Companies that attempt to charge loan shark interest rates will be shut down.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/AG-Stein-Protects-Consumers-from-Predatory-Loans.aspx>

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## OHIO

May 31, 2017

### **Attorney General DeWine Files Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturers for Fraudulent Marketing; Fueling Opioid Epidemic**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today filed a lawsuit against five leading prescription opioid manufacturers and their related companies in Ross County Court of Common Pleas. The lawsuit alleges that the drug companies engaged in fraudulent marketing regarding the risks and benefits of prescription opioids which fueled Ohio's opioid epidemic. "We believe the evidence will also show that these companies got thousands and thousands of Ohioans -- our friends, our family members, our co-workers, our kids -- addicted to opioid pain medications, which has all too often led to use of the cheaper alternatives of heroin and synthetic opioids. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Files-Lawsuit-Against-Opio>

May 22, 2017

### **Campbell Man Accused of Consumer Protection Violations**

(YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection action against George N. Krinos, doing business as Windows, Doors, Kitchens, and More Construction Co., for failing to deliver promised home improvement services to consumers.

The lawsuit, filed in the Mahoning County Common Pleas Court, alleges that Krinos used the name “George Nicholis” in his business dealings as Windows, Doors, Kitchens, and More, and offered home improvement work, such as roofing services and home remodeling, in northeast Ohio. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Campbell-Man-Accused-of-Consumer-Protection-Violat>

May 15, 2017

### **Zanesville Heating and Cooling Repairman Accused of Repeat Consumer Protection Violations**

(ZANESVILLE, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against a

Zanesville man accused of repeatedly failing to deliver promised heating and cooling services to Ohio consumers.

The lawsuit accuses Alan Vohs, doing business as Alan Able Heating and Cooling, of violating Ohio's Consumer Sales Practices Act and Home Solicitation Sales Act.

In 2016, the Muskingum County Common Pleas Court entered a judgment against Vohs for similar violations after the Ohio Attorney General's Office filed a consumer protection lawsuit against him in 2015. Under the judgment, Vohs was ordered to pay \$7,912 to reimburse nine consumers and he was prohibited from entering into new consumer transactions until he fulfilled his obligations under the judgment. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Zanesville-Heating-and-Cooling-Repairman-Accused-o>

May 12, 2017

### **Attorney General DeWine, FTC Take Action Against Alleged Computer Repair Scam**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and the Federal Trade Commission today announced a joint lawsuit against the operators of an alleged computer repair scam. The action is part of a nationwide sweep against sham tech-support services.

According to the lawsuit, Repair All PC and several related companies and individuals tricked consumers into paying for unnecessary computer support services and security software.

Nationwide, hundreds of consumers filed complaints about the scheme with the Federal Trade Commission, Attorney General's Office, or other agencies. Victims often reported losing about \$100 to \$500 each, though some reported losing much more. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-FTC-Take-Action-Against-A>

May 01, 2017

### **North Carolina Man Indicted for Running Roofing Scam in Ohio, West Virginia**

(MARIETTA, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and Washington County Prosecutor Kevin Rings today announced the indictment of a roofer accused of stealing more than \$200,000 from 34 victims in Ohio and West Virginia.

Anthony Combs, 49, of Smithfield, North Carolina, was indicted Wednesday by a Washington County grand jury on seven counts, including engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity, grand theft, theft from the elderly, telecommunications fraud, and money laundering. The indictment became public today. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/North-Carolina-Man-Indicted-for-Running-Roofing-Sc>

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## OKLAHOMA

May 01, 2017

### **Attorney General Hunter Files Charges on Tornado King**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter today announced the filing of seven felony counts of embezzlement against William Stephens, who owns Tornado King Shelters.

After the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Unit received multiple complaints of alleged fraud against the Tornado King Shelters company, an investigation was launched into Stephens and his company.

Throughout the course of the investigation, agents discovered on multiple occasions the Tornado King received full or partial payments for work his company never completed. When victims attempted to contact Stephens’ company, he was unresponsive. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=31835](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=31835)

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## PENNSYLVANIA

May 30, 2017

### **Attorney General Shapiro: Scam artist bilked Lancaster County elderly woman out of life’s savings**

LANCASTER — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced the arrest of a Washington County man charged with using an investment scheme to steal approximately \$159,000 from a 69-year-old Lancaster County woman. The scam artist led the victim to believe she would face retaliation from the mafia if she did not continue giving him money. The victim lost her life’s savings to the scheme.

Yancey Taylor, 45, of Donora, used the money that he extorted from the victim and gambled it away at various casinos in Pennsylvania, Attorney General Shapiro said today at a news conference at the Lancaster County Courthouse, where he was joined by Senior Deputy Attorney General Daniel Dye and Lancaster County District Attorney Craig Stedman. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media\\_and\\_Resources/Press\\_Releases/Press\\_Release/?pid=3417](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3417)

May 09, 2017

### **Attorney General Shapiro: Bucks County consumers scammed by Feasterville “Motor Mart”**

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today detailed a lawsuit against a Bucks County business and its president accused of violating Pennsylvania consumer protection laws by repeatedly failing to deliver paid-for repairs, equipment and tools to its customers.

The lawsuit states that Gregory Bertino and his business, Robert’s Motor Mart, routinely failed to repair and return customers’ equipment and did not provide refunds to customers. Robert’s

Motor Mart is a small-engine sale and repair shop in Feasterville, which advertised services for lawn mowers, pressure washers, weed whackers, snow blowers and other items. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media\\_and\\_Resources/Press\\_Releases/Press\\_Release/?pid=3376](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3376)

May 05, 2017

### **Attorney General Shapiro Announces Arrest of Tax Preparer for Scamming and Stealing over \$76,000 from Central Pennsylvania Clients**

HARRISBURG — Today, Attorney General Josh Shapiro announced the arrest of a tax preparer charged with scamming and stealing over \$76,000 from clients by claiming he was filing their tax returns with the state and federal governments – and then pocketing their money and never filing their returns.

The Office of Attorney General’s Bureau of Criminal Investigations arrested Nick J. Chacanas, 55, of the 400 block of Pine Street, Slatington, Thursday and filed criminal charges relating to a three-year scam that Chacanas perpetrated on eight different clients who live or work in York, Dauphin, Cumberland and Perry counties. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media\\_and\\_Resources/Press\\_Releases/Press\\_Release/?pid=3374](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3374)

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## SOUTH DAKOTA

May 30, 2017

### **Hutchinson County Man Sentenced for Grand Theft by Deception**

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Marty Jackley announced today that Stephan Nicholas McCrae, 50, Menno, was sentenced in Circuit Court, Fall River County, to 4 years in the South Dakota State Penitentiary on one count of grand theft by deception. McCrae was also ordered to pay \$10,082.26 in restitution to multiple victims across the state.

Charges stemmed from a multi-state scheme where McCrae made fraudulent contracts with consumers to build fences, taking thousands of dollars in down payments for services he did not have the intention of performing. McCrae was also convicted in Missouri, Iowa, and Minnesota of similar charges in connection with this scheme. This is McCrae’s ninth lifetime felony conviction. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://atg.sd.gov/OurOffice/Media/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=1794>

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## TENNESSEE

May 17, 2017

### **AG Lawsuit Alleges California Company Violated the Government Impostor Act**

Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III today announced the filing of a lawsuit against a



California company and its principals for violations under the Government Impostor Act. The civil enforcement action names LA Investors LLC, based in southern California, and its principals, Roberto Romero and Laura Romero. LA Investors conducted business in Tennessee under the names “Local Records Office” and “National Profile Document.” According to the lawsuit, LA Investors, doing business as Local Records Office, mails invoices to new homeowners requiring payment in order for the homeowners to receive copies of their deeds. These look-alike invoices deceive homeowners into thinking the documents are from the government. Consumers have paid LA Investors for copies of their deeds when they are available for free or for a nominal fee from the local Register of Deeds Office. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/news/50573>

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## TEXAS

May 31, 2017

### **AG Paxton Reaches Settlement with Vivint and Warns Texans of Unscrupulous Door-to-Door Alarm Systems Sales Tactics**

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that his office reached a settlement with home security company Vivint over allegations it violated the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act. Beginning in January 2012, Vivint employees conducted door-to-door sales for home alarm systems without being properly registered with the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). Under terms of the settlement, Vivint will ensure its employees are properly registered with DPS prior to conducting door-to-door sales and will provide consumers with notices informing them of their right to cancel contracts with the company. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-reaches-settlement-with-vivint-and-warns-texans-of-unscrupulous-d>

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## UTAH

May 01, 2017

### **Attorney General’s Office Urges Eligible Utah Residents to Submit Claims for Provigil Settlement**

SALT LAKE CITY May 1, 2017 – Attorney General Sean Reyes urges Utah residents to file claims or make their views known on a \$125 million multistate settlement that provides \$35 million for distribution to consumers who paid for the brand-name drug Provigil or generic modafinil from June 24, 2006, to March 31, 2012. The States asked and the court extended the time to file claims or express views on the settlement to June 25, 2017.

Provigil, which includes the active ingredient modafinil, is approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to improve wakefulness in adult patients with excessive sleepiness

associated with narcolepsy, obstructive sleep apnea, and shift work disorder. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/featured-content/attorney-generals-office-urges-eligible-utah-residents-to-submit-claims-for-provigil-settlement>

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## VERMONT

May 30, 2017

### **State Sues To Protect Vermont Businesses Hit By Phony Yellow Pages**

An online business directory, also known as a phony yellow pages, has violated the Vermont Consumer Protection Act, according to a lawsuit filed today by Attorney General T.J. Donovan. The lawsuit alleges that General Yellow Pages and its owner, Vladimir Adolphe, attempt to hide their fees from prospective customers, misrepresent the purpose of their telephone solicitations, and engage in other deceptive practices. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/state-sues-to-protect-vermont-businesses-hit-by-phony-yellow-pages.php>

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## VIRGINIA

May 09, 2017

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING REACHES SETTLEMENT WITH FREDERICKSBURG-AREA PAWNBROKER**

RICHMOND (May 9, 2017) - Attorney General Mark Herring announced today that his office has reached a settlement with Spotsylvania Gold & Pawn, Inc., a Fredericksburg-area pawnbroker, to provide nearly \$37,000 in refunds to more than 1,400 consumers to resolve allegations that the company charged illegal interest and fees beyond those permitted by Virginia's pawnbroker statutes and the Virginia Consumer Protection Act. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/945-may-9-2017-attorney-general-herring-reaches-settlement-with-fredericksburg-area-pawnbroker>

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## WASHINGTON

May 25, 2017

### **AG: Local businesses must stop mislabeling sushi**

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced agreements with two Washington restaurants ordering them to cease mislabeling fish in sushi.

An investigation by the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division uncovered evidence that the Washington restaurants incorrectly labeled fish used in their sushi between March and August 2016. Assurances of Discontinuance filed in King County Superior Court require both businesses to accurately disclose the species of fish sold to consumers and pay costs and fees. "Consumers deserve to know the truth about what they are buying," Ferguson said. "If you

mislead consumers, my office will hold you accountable.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-local-businesses-must-stop-mislabeling-sushi>

May 05, 2017

### **AG: Uber ends practice of sending unsolicited text messages to Washingtonians**

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson announced today that he reached an agreement with Uber Technologies Inc. prohibiting its practice of sending unsolicited text messages to Washington consumers. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Washingtonians received unsolicited texts from Uber.

The agreement, filed in King County Superior Court, also requires that Uber provide opt-out instructions to consumers who do consent to receive texts.

“Receiving text messages you didn’t ask for — and not knowing how to stop them — frustrates consumers,” Ferguson said. “This agreement ensures that consumers control whether they receive messages from Uber.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-uber-ends-practice-sending-unsolicited-text-messages-washingtonians>

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## WISCONSIN

May 23, 2017

### **AG Schimel Files Lawsuits Against Milwaukee Stores Selling Synthetic Cannabinoids**

MADISON, WI – Today, Attorney General Brad Schimel and the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), sued Atomic Glass and Food Town Mini Mart, in Milwaukee County, for selling designer drug synthetic cannabinoids known by such names as “Spice” and “Kush” in violation of Wisconsin consumer protection law, in particular, the prohibition on fraudulent drug advertising (Wis. Stat. § 100.182).

“I will not tolerate any drug dealer putting our communities at risk with dangerous and unpredictable drugs. At DOJ, we work hard to bring all illicit drug dealers to justice, whether their retail venue is on the street or at a store,” said Attorney General Schimel. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.state.wi.us/news-releases/ag-schimel-files-lawsuits-against-milwaukee-stores-selling-synthetic-cannabinoids>

## Multistate Cases

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### Johnson & Johnson OTC Drug Quality \$33 Million Multistate Settlement

**Date:** May 25, 2017

**Details:** 42 states and the District of Columbia joined in a \$33 million settlement with Johnson & Johnson Consumer Inc. and Johnson & Johnson concerning the conduct of its wholly-owned subsidiary, McNeil-PPC, Inc. ("McNeil") in the marketing, promotion, and distribution of certain over-the-counter ("OTC") drugs. The Complaint, filed in Richmond Circuit Court, alleges that McNeil violated state consumer protection laws by misrepresenting the contents and quality of their OTC drugs, and these drugs' compliance with current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP). According to the complaint, McNeil delivered certain batches of OTC drugs that failed to comply with federal standards and, as such, were deemed adulterated. McNeil's alleged quality control lapses resulted in recalls of drugs manufactured between 2009 to 2011, including Tylenol, Motrin, Benadryl, St. Joseph Aspirin, Sudafed, Pepcid, Mylanta, Roloids, Zyrtec, and Zyrtec Eye Drops.

The settlement resolves allegations that Johnson & Johnson, acting through McNeil, unlawfully promoted their OTC drugs as complying with federally mandated cGMPs, even though the FDA found that some McNeil manufacturing facilities did not comply with cGMPs between 2009 and 2011. Moreover, some McNeil OTC drugs were deemed adulterated as a matter of federal law.

*Example Press Release: <http://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/957-may-25-2017-attorney-general-herring-announces-33-million-multistate-settlement-with-johnson-johnson-consumer-inc-and-johnson-johnson>*

**States:** Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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## \$18.5M Settlement with Target Corporation Over 2013 Data Breach

**Date:** May 23, 2017

**Details:** Connecticut and Illinois led 47 states and the District of Columbia in reaching an \$18.5 million settlement with the Target Corporation to resolve the states' investigation into the company's 2013 data breach. The settlement represents the largest multistate data breach settlement achieved to date and sets industry standards for better protecting consumers' information from data breaches in the future.

The states' investigation, led by Madigan and Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen, found that cyber attackers accessed Target's gateway server through credentials stolen from a third-party HVAC vendor on or about November 12, 2013. The credentials were used to exploit weaknesses in Target's system, allowing the attackers to access a customer service database, install malware on the system and to capture customer data, including full names, telephone numbers, email addresses, mailing addresses, payment card numbers, expiration dates, credit card verification codes and encrypted debit PINs.

The breach affected more than 41 million customer payment card accounts and contact information for more than 60 million customers.

*Example Press Release:*

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170523b.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170523b.html)

**States:** Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

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## States Reach Settlements, Cooperation Agreements with Two Former Executives in Generic Drug Multistate Investigation

**Date:** March 31, 2017

**Details:** Two former executives of a New Jersey-based generic pharmaceutical manufacturer, Heritage Pharmaceuticals, Inc., have entered into settlement and cooperation agreements with 41 states and territories that are investigating what they allege is widespread anticompetitive activity in the generic drug industry that has led to higher prices for consumers and state governments, Attorney General George Jepsen announced today.

Mr. Jason Malek, the former president of Heritage Pharmaceuticals, Inc., and Mr. Jeffrey Glazer, the former chairman and chief executive officer of Heritage Pharmaceuticals, Inc. – each residents of New Jersey – have entered into settlement agreements with the investigating states in which they have agreed to cooperate in the states' ongoing litigation and investigation.

*Example Press Release: <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?A=2341&Q=593238>*

**States:** Connecticut, Alabama, Arizona, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin

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### [Letter Calling for Federal Legislation to Return Prescription Drug Settlement Money to the States](#)

**Date:** May 18, 2017

**Details:** The letter, co-written by Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein, addressed from the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) to U.S. Senate Finance Committee Chair Sen. Orrin Hatch and Ranking Member Sen. Ron Wyden, asks for money recovered from pharmaceutical fraud settlements involving the prescription drug benefit known as Medicare Part D be returned to the states.

It calls for congressional action to fix a quirk in federal law which prevents states from receiving equitable shares of health care fraud recoveries.

*Original Press Release: <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/DeWine-50-Attorneys-General-Request-Congressional>*

*A copy of the letter is available at <http://bit.ly/2rr5lqx> .*

**States:** 51 state attorneys general

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### [Attorneys General Call for Federal Policy Change to Expand Their Medicaid Fraud Authority to Address More Resident Abuse Cases](#)

**Date:** March 10, 2017

**Details:** 38 Attorneys General signed onto a National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) letter urging the U.S. government to change its policy so that state attorneys general could use federal funds to investigate and prosecute a wider range of Medicaid abuse and neglect cases, including those that happen at home.

*Example Press Release: <http://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/05/10/ag-derek-schmidt-leads-national-effort-to-combat-abuse-and-neglect-of-medicaid-patients>  
Letter available at: <http://www.naag.org/assets/redesign/files/sign-on-letter/Medicaid%20Expanded%20Duties%20final%20NAAG%20sign%20on.pdf>*

**Fed Agency:** Department of Health and Human Services

**States:** Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

## Medicaid Fraud

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### ARKANSAS

May 24, 2017

#### **Rutledge Announces Benton County Man Sentenced for Property Theft and Failure to Maintain Records**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Benton County man for property theft and failure to maintain records.

Joseph Brannon Randolph pleaded guilty in Pulaski County Circuit Court and was sentenced to five years probation. He will pay \$27,942 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program, a \$2,500 fine and court costs in the criminal case. Randolph also agreed to a civil judgment of \$399,876.63 to be entered in Benton County Circuit Court for restitution and civil penalties resulting from false claims he submitted to the Arkansas Medicaid Program.

“People attempting to defraud Arkansas taxpayers will be held accountable,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Investigators and attorneys from the Attorney General’s office work each day to go after those who defraud the system in which so many depend. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-announces-benton-county-man-sentenced-for-property-theft-and-failure-to-maintain-records/>

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### KENTUCKY

May 15, 2017

#### **Beshear: Former Eastern Kentucky Suboxone Clinic Doctor Indicted on Fraud, Theft, Improperly Prescribing**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 15, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear and his Office of Medicaid Fraud and Abuse today announced a eight-count indictment of a former Eastern Kentucky Suboxone clinic doctor.

Dr. Curtis Edens, 57, of Hardeeville, South Carolina, was indicted by a Lawrence County grand

jury May 12 on two counts of Medicaid fraud; one count of improperly prescribing a controlled substance; one count of theft by deception over \$500 – all Class D felonies; and four counts of theft by deception over \$10,000, Class C felonies.

The allegations involve Edens operating a now closed Lawrence County Suboxone clinic in 2016 and fraudulently charging Medicaid recipients cash for services. Medicaid specifically prohibits providers from billing cash for services that are covered by the program. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=323>

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## MARYLAND

May 22, 2017

### **Attorney General Frosh Files Lawsuit Against Assisted Living Facility and Its Owners for Submission of False Claims to Medicaid Program**

BALTIMORE, MD (May 22, 2017) –Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that his office has filed suit in the Circuit Court for Baltimore County against Kris-Leigh Catered Living of Severna Park, LLC and its owners (“Kris-Leigh”) under the Maryland False Health Claims Act for submitting or causing claims to be submitted to the Maryland Medicaid Program for services that were not provided or which were so grossly substandard that the care was worthless and effectively without value. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/052217.pdf>

May 02, 2017

### **Wells House, Inc. To Pay \$375,000 to Settle Medicaid Fraud**

BALTIMORE, MD (May 2, 2017)-Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Wells House, Inc., a Hagerstown-based drug and alcohol treatment provider, will pay \$375,000 to the State of Maryland to resolve allegations that the company committed Medicaid fraud by employing a prohibited person and deceiving state regulators.

The federal List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (“LEIE”) lists people that Medicaid, Medicare and federal health program providers cannot employ due to past misconduct. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/050217.pdf>

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## MICHIGAN

May 11, 2017

### **Schuette Charges Southwest Michigan Chiropractor with Medicaid Fraud**

LANSING — Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced he has filed two felony counts of Medicaid Fraud—False Claim, a four-year felony, against Southwest Michigan chiropractor Ahad Lotfi, 53, of Lawton.

Lotfi, who owned and operated chiropractic clinics in Hartford, Paw Paw, Bangor, and South Haven, was allegedly billing supplies to the Medicaid program that were not eligible for



Medicaid billing. These supplies included custom made shoe inserts and therapeutic pillows, which Medicaid pays \$270.50 and \$97.96 respectively per item. The Medicaid program allegedly paid Lotfi nearly \$200,000.00 over two years as a result of billing these two item codes. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849\\_47203-411565--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-411565--,00.html)

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## NEVADA

May 23, 2017

### **Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Behavioral Health Provider**

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Tonya Martin-Lowe, 54, of Las Vegas, was sentenced today in a Medicaid fraud case involving the failure to maintain required documentation.

Martin-Lowe was sentenced for one gross misdemeanor offense of Intentional Failure to Maintain Adequate Records by District Court Judge Michelle Leavitt. Leavitt sentenced Martin-Lowe to 364 days incarceration, suspended, performance of 100 hours of community service and payment of \$2,108 in restitution. The fraud occurred between July 2014 and October 2014. “Providers that commit fraud against the Medicaid system, no matter what the dollar amount might be, have stolen from the Medicaid system,” said Laxalt. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney\\_General\\_Laxalt\\_Announces\\_Sentencing\\_of\\_Behavioral\\_Health\\_Provider\(2\)/](http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Sentencing_of_Behavioral_Health_Provider(2)/)

May 17, 2017

### **Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Group Home Owner**

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced today that Magdalena Luvisminda Villanueva, 76, was sentenced for Neglect of Duty in Willful or Wanton Disregard of Safety of a Person, a gross misdemeanor offense.

District Court Judge Jennifer Togliatti sentenced Villanueva to 179 days incarceration (suspended), pay \$3,000 in enforcement costs, and placed her on probation for 3 years. During this probationary period, Villanueva is not allowed to seek or obtain employment as a licensed owner, administrator or caregiver in a medical facility. The crime occurred during January, February and December 2015. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney\\_General\\_Laxalt\\_Announces\\_Sentencing\\_of\\_Group\\_Home\\_Owner/](http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Sentencing_of_Group_Home_Owner/)

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## NEW YORK

May 31, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Criminal Guilty Plea And Multi-Million Dollar Civil Settlement With Narco Freedom**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today the guilty plea and a multi-million dollar civil settlement with Narco Freedom Inc., a Bronx-based not-for-profit provider of substance abuse treatment, for its participation in a criminal enterprise. At the time of its indictment in 2015, Narco Freedom was an enrolled Medicaid provider that received nearly \$40 million annually in taxpayer-funded reimbursement. In its plea and a parallel State civil settlement agreement, Narco Freedom admitted today to stealing millions of dollars from the Medicaid program through the actions of its former chief executive officer Alan Brand and subsequent chief executive officer Gerald Bethea. In New York State Supreme Court, Bronx County, Narco Freedom, pled guilty to one count of Enterprise Corruption, a class B felony, three counts of Grand Larceny in the First Degree, a class B felony ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-criminal-guilty-plea-and-multi-million-dollar-civil>

May 26, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Sentencing Of Long Island Resident Who Stole \$75K From Medicaid**

HAUPPAUGE – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the sentencing of Sonia Ponce, 57, of Freeport, for stealing approximately \$75,000 from Medicaid by causing claims to be filed with Medicaid that falsely stated that home-health care services were provided to two of her relatives by the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), a home-care program funded by Medicaid. In March 2017, Ponce pleaded guilty to Forgery in the Third Degree and Petit Larceny, both class A misdemeanors. Today, the Honorable Anthony Paradiso in Nassau County District Court sentenced Ponce to one week in jail, three years' probation, 150 hours of community service and a \$1,000 fine. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-sentencing-long-island-resident-who-stole-75k-medicaid>

May 19, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea And Sentencing Of Two Individuals For Stealing From Medicaid**

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the pleas and sentences of two individuals in unrelated investigations for causing claims to be filed with Medicaid that falsely represented that home health care services were provided to relatives. Both Tina Gabel of Poughkeepsie and Enny Portillo of Highland Mills admitted to stealing from the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program (CDPAP), a home care program funded by Medicaid. CDPAP allows a physically disabled individual or their representative to assume full

responsibility for their home care and recruit, hire, train, supervise and fire the personal assistants providing the care. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-guilty-plea-and-sentencing-two-individuals-stealing-medicaid>

May 11, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Announces Joint \$54 Million Settlement With CareCore Resolving Allegations Company Submitted Millions In False Claims To Medicaid**

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced today that New York, along with 20 other states, has reached an agreement in principle to join the federal government in a settlement with CareCore National LLC (CareCore), now part of eviCore healthcare that was unsealed today. CareCore provides utilization management services including determinations of medical necessity to New York Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). The agreement settles allegations that CareCore instituted a scheme to auto-approve or “Process As Directed” (“PAD”) hundreds of radiology service requests on a daily basis, deeming those diagnostic services as reasonable and medically necessary, even though there had been no evaluation of those cases by the appropriate medical personnel. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-joint-54-million-settlement-carecore-resolving-allegations>

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## NORTH CAROLINA

May 16, 2017

### **AG Stein Reaches \$131,000 Settlement over Medicare and Medicaid False Claims Act Allegations**

RALEIGH, NC – Attorney General Josh Stein announced today that North Carolina has reached a settlement with TeamHealth Holdings, as successor in interest to IPC Healthcare Inc., f/k/a IPC The Hospitalists Inc. (IPC). The agreement resolves allegations that IPC violated the False Claims Act by billing Medicare, Medicaid, the Defense Health Agency and the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program for higher and more expensive levels of medical service than were actually performed (a practice known as “up-coding”). ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/AG-Stein-Reaches-\\$131,000-Settlement-over-Medicare.aspx](http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/AG-Stein-Reaches-$131,000-Settlement-over-Medicare.aspx)

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## OHIO

May 12, 2017

### **Attorney General DeWine Announces Settlement in Principle to Recover \$446,800 for Ohio Medicaid Program**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced that Ohio and

several other states have reached an agreement in principle to join the federal government in a settlement with CareCore National LLC, a benefits management company, to resolve allegations that it improperly authorized medical procedures paid for with Medicare and Medicaid funds. The settlement includes \$446,878.80 in restitution and other recoveries for Ohio's Medicaid program.

The agreement settles allegations that CareCore instituted a scheme to automatically approve hundreds of radiology service requests on a daily basis, deeming those diagnostic services as reasonable and medically necessary, even though there had been no evaluation of those cases by the appropriate medical personnel. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Announces-Settlement-in-Pr>

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## TENNESSEE

May 11, 2017

### **Attorney General Files Lawsuit against a Network of Pain Management Clinics**

Attorney General Herbert H. Slatery III today announced the filing of a lawsuit against an organization of pain management clinics owned and operated by Michael Kestner and his business partner, Dr. Lisabeth Williams. Kestner is the primary owner of MMi, which operated at least 18 pain management clinics throughout Tennessee.

The civil action, filed in Williamson County Circuit Court, alleges millions of dollars in fraudulent claims to TennCare dating back to at least 2006.

MMi Pain Clinics and their providers purport to treat people suffering from chronic pain.

According to the lawsuit, defendants conducted a fraudulent scheme that involved regularly subjecting patients to unnecessary medical procedures. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.tn.gov/attorneygeneral/news/50395>

## Consumer Advocacy

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### Former Corinthian College students to receive federal student loan cancellation

**Date:** March 31, 2017

**Details:** Students who first enrolled in the identified campuses and programs during the specified time periods are eligible for a special "streamlined" discharge of their federal loans.

*Example Press Release:* <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170522c.html>

More information is available at [studentaid.ed.gov/borrower-defense](http://studentaid.ed.gov/borrower-defense).

*Lists of the affected campuses, programs and dates of enrollment are available at [www.StudentAid.gov/ev-wy-findings](http://www.StudentAid.gov/ev-wy-findings) and at [www.StudentAid.gov/heald-findings](http://www.StudentAid.gov/heald-findings)*

**Fed Agency:** U.S. Department of Education

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## ARIZONA

May 02, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Avoid Moving Scams during Arizona's Peak Moving Season**

PHOENIX – As Arizona's peak moving season begins, Attorney General Mark Brnovich is warning consumers to look out for unscrupulous movers who take advantage of hardworking families. Moving scams come in a variety of forms, including false advertising, undisclosed fees, lack of insurance, and lowball prices combined with bait-and-switch tactics. Peak moving season in Arizona starts in May and ends in July.

"Hostage loads are against the law and Arizonans will now have even more protection during the moving process," said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. "Spotting a moving scam can be tricky. Education and vigilance are key to protecting yourself from unethical movers." This year, the Attorney General's Office worked with Representative Jeff Weninger on legislation that protects Arizona families during the moving process. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/consumer-alert-avoid-moving-scams-during-arizona%E2%80%99s-peak-moving-season>

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## ARKANSAS

May 31, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Scammers Prey on Flood Victims as They Rebuild**

LITTLE ROCK – Many families in Arkansas are still cleaning up from the historic floods that hit our state about a month ago. As flood waters recede, some of the damage is becoming more visible, and some are trying to use the floods to line their own pockets by selling water damaged items.

"Some retailers and sellers are transparent that items may have water damage, but others try to hide any damage from potential buyers," said Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. "Arkansans need to be cautious when purchasing electronics, furniture or equipment and look for potential damage themselves. Consumers should also understand that some flood damage may not be visible at first glance and mold or other problems could be inside the item." ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/consumer-alerts/scammers-prey-on-flood-victims-as-they-rebuild/>

May 24, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Booking Travel Online Could Include Unwanted Baggage**

LITTLE ROCK – Booking vacations online can be very challenging because it can be difficult for consumers to verify what they are actually purchasing. Arkansans value their vacation time and want to make sure their hard-earned money is well spent. While most vacation booking websites are legitimate, there are a few unscrupulous sites that scam users out of money by accepting payment for a hotel or house rental that does not actually exist.

“It is easy for scammers to hide behind their computer screens and set up fake travel sites,” said Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. “They can make these sites look legitimate by stealing images from actual travel sites, causing confusion for potential buyers. It is important for Arkansans to do their homework when booking, and remember that if an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/consumer-alerts/booking-travel-online-could-include-unwanted-baggage/>

May 17, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Sweepstakes Scams Stealing Arkansans Cash**

LITTLE ROCK – Scam artists are making unsolicited phone calls and sending unsolicited emails to convince Arkansans they have won a sweepstakes or lottery. But there is a catch – “winners” must first wire a processing fee or fill out a form to provide banking information to the con artist so the money can be deposited. This is a scam.

“Arkansans work hard for their money, and these criminals who do what they can to steal from us are appalling,” said Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. “My office has had recent calls from Arkansans reporting they were told they had won \$2 million – if only they would send \$900. Consumers need to be cautious when receiving unsolicited phone calls or emails. Legitimate organizations will never require a processing fee or private banking information in exchange for a prize.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/consumer-alerts/sweepstakes-scams-stealing-arkansans-cash/>

May 10, 2017

### **VETERAN ALERT: Get Schooled on the GI Bill**

LITTLE ROCK – As schools are getting ready to wrap up for the summer, seniors are making plans for their next phase in life. For many students, this involves college, a vocational school or the military. Those brave men and women who choose a military career, may also become eligible for the Post-9/11 GI Bill when they complete the required training and fulfill active duty service requirements. This bill, much like the original GI Bill passed Congress and signed by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1944, strives to help service members learn a skill or attend college to place them on a successful career path. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/consumer-alerts/get-schooled-on-the-gi-bill/>

May 05, 2017

### **Attorney General’s Office to Host Summer Cyber Safety Series**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge will host a Summer Cyber Series of regional trainings on internet safety for teachers and parents across the State, in order to reach more children and students. By training teachers on how to implement lessons about staying

safe online in their classrooms and updating parents on the newest apps and technologies their children may be using, the Attorney General's office is providing more resources to protect students from online dangers.

In 2016, Rutledge teamed up with Common Sense Media and AT&T to adopt the Digital You training program, which offers tools, tips, apps and guidance about staying safe online for people of all levels of online experience. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/attorney-generals-office-to-host-summer-cyber-safety-series/>

May 04, 2017

### **Rutledge: Scammers Pose as Charities to Help Victims After Storms and Flooding**

LITTLE ROCK – Con artists often target Arkansans as the State recovers from storm and flood damage. Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge says some scammers use this trying time to tug on the heart strings of kind-hearted Arkansans by posing as a charity to help these families. But they only end up stealing the money that was intended for families putting their lives back together.

“Families across our State have been displaced and have lost many personal belongings in the effects of the recent storms,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Those of us who are not in the hardest hit areas often want to do what we can to help those in need, but scam artists are often out there posing as legitimate charities, stealing money instead of turning it over to families in need.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/rutledge-scammers-pose-as-charities-to-help-victims-after-storms-and-flooding/>

May 03, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Scammers Phishing for Mother's Day**

LITTLE ROCK – With Mother's Day around the corner, many Arkansans are still on the hunt for the perfect gift for mom, but scammers on social media and online are angling to get you to turn over personal and financial information, in exchange for a \$50 gift certificate.

“Spring fishing is a tradition across Arkansas,” said Attorney General Leslie Rutledge. “But scammers phish for information that can lead hackers and scam artists straight into a consumers' bank account.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/consumer-alerts/scammers-phishing-for-mothers-day/>

May 02, 2017

### **Attorney General Schedules Mobile Offices in Storm-Damaged Areas**

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge announced today that the Attorney General's office will visit counties damaged by recent severe weather by hosting mobile offices and urging Arkansans to beware of con artists and price gouging following the recent storms

and flooding.

“Scam artists are already seeking to take advantage of those who have had damage to their home or business,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “As the clean-up process continues, I urge all Arkansans to use caution and to call my office if they suspect any type of fraud or price gouging. My office is here to fight for you, which is also why I have launched an accelerated Mobile Office schedule to visit some of Arkansas’s worst storm ravaged counties in the next two weeks.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/attorney-general-schedules-mobile-offices-in-storm-damaged-areas/>

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## CALIFORNIA

May 12, 2017

### **Attorney General Becerra: Beware Of "Tech Support" Scams**

LOS ANGELES – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a consumer alert to warn Californians about "tech support" scams targeting personal computers. Also, this morning the Federal Trade Commission announced it will be conducting an aggressive law enforcement sweep targeting tech support scams nationwide.

“Millions of Californians rely on computers for banking, shopping, school work and much more,” said Attorney General Becerra. “While technology makes our lives easier, it also creates opportunities for scams. Californians should be particularly wary of anyone asking for money or private information online or over the phone.”

Tech support scams often begin either by phone or online, via a pop-up window requesting to chat with a user or directing people to call a phone number to fix a computer problem. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-beware-tech-support-scams>

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## COLORADO

May 15, 2017

### **Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Warns of Roofing and Other Home Repair Scams after Recent Storms**

DENVER – In the wake of recent violent storms, Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman is warning consumers to be on the lookout for fly-by-night roofing and home repair contractors who promise to do work, but take off with your money. Following epic hail storms across the metro area, the Attorney General advises consumers to be on the lookout for unscrupulous individuals and businesses appearing unannounced at their doors.

“Natural disasters always increase the number of roofing and other home repair scams. Unlicensed contractors and repair companies often canvas entire neighborhoods following large hail storms like we saw this week, promising to clean up broken trees and other debris,



repair windows and siding, or repair damaged roofs. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://coag.gov/press-room/press-releases/05-15-17>

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## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

May 31, 2017

### **Attorney General Racine and Federal Consumer Board Urge Public to Stop Use of ‘LayZ Board’ Hoverboards**

D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) are urging consumers to immediately stop using “LayZ Board” self-balancing scooters (known as hoverboards). CPSC has evidence that a LayZ Board was the hoverboard involved in a tragic house fire that took the lives of two young girls on March 10, 2017, in Harrisburg, Pa. “This Pennsylvania house fire is a horrific tragedy,” Attorney General Racine said. “No toy is worth the risk that this particular brand of hoverboards poses, according to the CPSC.” The LayZ Board is a two-wheeled, battery-powered, self-balancing scooter that has a pivoting platform intended for the rider’s feet, but does not have a handlebar. The name “LayZ Board” appears on the front of the product. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-and-federal-consumer-board-urge-public-stop-use-%E2%80%98layz-board%E2%80%99>

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## FLORIDA

May 17, 2017

### **Attorney General Bondi Launches New Military Consumer Protection Initiative**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi today launched a new consumer protection program that will serve the unique needs of our military and veteran communities and directly assist with consumer protection-related issues. The Military and Veterans Assistance Program is Attorney General Bondi’s most recent effort to spread awareness of and stop deceptive business practices affecting military service members, veterans and their families. “Florida has more than 90,000 active duty and reserve military members and more than 1.5 million veterans,” said Attorney General Bondi. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/814D09DD544D35E7852581230053FD85>

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## FLORIDA

May 15, 2017

### **Space Coast Daily: ALERT: Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi Issues Warning About Tech Support Scammers**

Not too long ago people primarily stored precious family photos in a trunk in the attic, and kept Social Security cards, birth certificates and family medical records locked away in a filing

cabinet.

Today, all this information can be stored on a personal computer, and if a tech problem threatens this vital information, people panic.

The fear of losing irreplaceable family photos and the anxiety associated with replacing important government documents sets in—leaving some people willing to do anything to save their computers. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/9FA895DAF6C34F4385258121004F9E5D>

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## GEORGIA

May 15, 2017

### **CONSUMER ALERT: Precautionary Measures to Protect Yourself from Cyberattacks**

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr is urging consumers to take necessary precautions in the wake of an international cyberattack. It is being reported that most of the attacks are coming in the form of “ransomware;” a type of malicious software (malware) designed to block access to a computer system until a sum of money is paid.

“With hackers and identity thieves frequently finding new ways to infiltrate your computer, end-user awareness is critical in preventing the spread of malware,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-05-15/consumer-alert-precautionary-measures-protect-yourself-cyberattacks>

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## ILLINOIS

May 31, 2017

### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES GOVERNOR TO SIGN STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today applauded the Illinois House for passing legislation to reform the student loan servicing industry to help student loan borrowers repay their loans. The bill addresses widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry that were revealed by Madigan's investigation and lawsuit against one of the country's largest student loan servicing companies, Navient.

Senate Bill 1351, drafted by Madigan's office and Sen. Daniel Biss, would create a Student Loan Bill of Rights to better protect borrowers from abuses in the student loan industry. The bill, sponsored in the House by Rep. Will Guzzardi, passed the House by a vote of 63 to 48, and will now go to the governor for final approval. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170531b.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170531b.html)

May 24, 2017

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS PASSES HOUSE COMMITTEE**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced an Illinois House committee passed legislation to reform the student loan servicing industry to help student loan borrowers repay their loans. The bill addresses widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry that were revealed by Madigan’s investigation and lawsuit against one of the country’s largest student loan servicing companies, Navient.

Senate Bill 1351, drafted by Madigan’s office and Sen. Daniel Biss, would create a Student Loan Bill of Rights to better protect borrowers from abuses in the student loan industry. The bill, which is sponsored by Rep. Will Guzzardi, passed the House Executive Committee by a vote of six to four, and will now be considered by the full House. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170524b.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170524b.html)

May 10, 2017

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS PASSES SENATE**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced the Illinois Senate passed legislation to reform the student loan servicing industry to help student loan borrowers repay their loans. The bill addresses widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry that were revealed by Madigan’s investigation and lawsuit against one of the country’s largest student loan servicing companies, Navient.

Senate Bill 1351, drafted by Madigan’s office and Sen. Daniel Biss, would create a Student Loan Bill of Rights to better protect borrowers from abuses in the student loan industry. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 34 to 15 with one member voting present, and will now be considered in the House, where it will be sponsored by Rep. Will Guzzardi. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170510b.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170510b.html)

May 08, 2017

**ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN URGES ILLINOIS SENATE TO PASS STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS**

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today was joined by Senator Daniel Biss, Illinois students and consumer advocates to urge the Illinois Senate to reject pressure from student loan servicers and their lobbyists and pass legislation to help student loan borrowers repay their loans.

The Student Loan Bill of Rights, Senate Bill 1351, addresses widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry that were revealed by Madigan’s investigation and lawsuit against Navient, one of the country’s largest student loan servicing companies. The legislation would reform the student loan industry to better protect borrowers from rampant student loan abuses. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017\\_05/20170508.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_05/20170508.html)

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## IOWA

May 15, 2017

### **Miller Urges Eligible Iowans to Submit Provigil Settlement Claims**

DES MOINES – Iowans who paid for the brand-name sleep disorder brand-name drug Provigil or generic drug modafinil during a six-year period have until June 25 to file a payment claim through a multistate settlement reached last year with 48-state attorneys general, including Attorney General Tom Miller, who alleged the manufacturer engaged in anticompetitive conduct.

Last month, a federal judge extended the previous April 13 consumer claims deadline as part of the \$125 million settlement with drugmaker Cephalon and its affiliated companies, including Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, Teva Pharmaceuticals USA and Barr Laboratories. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/miller-urges-eligible-iowans-to-submit-provigil-settlement-claims/>

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## KANSAS

May 22, 2017

### **Consumer Alert: Storm damage could attract illegal contractors**

TOPEKA – (May 22, 2017) – Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt is urging Barton County residents to use caution to avoid scams by transient contractors following last week’s storms. “After storm damage, our instinct is to clean up and make repairs as quickly as possible,” Schmidt said. “When considering roofing work on a home or business, it is important that consumers make sure their roofing contractor is properly registered before signing any contract or having any work done. Consumers should request a copy of their roofer’s registration certificate and then should check our consumer protection website to confirm that the registration remains active.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/05/22/consumer-alert-storm-damage-could-attract-illegal-contractors>

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## KENTUCKY

May 30, 2017

### **Beshear: Scam Alerts Update – 9,300 Signed Up, 6,500 Informed, 160 Community Partners Onboard, Nearly \$1 Million Returned**

FRANKFORT, KY. (May 30, 2017) – A year after launching Scam Alerts, Attorney General Andy Beshear announced that his office is collaborating with more than 160 partners across the state

on Kentucky's first continuous, comprehensive push to protect seniors from scams. Beshear announced today that his newest partners are the Alzheimer's Association, Greater Kentucky-Southern Indiana Chapter and the Bluegrass Council of the Blind. Working with various partners, Beshear's office has signed up over 9,300 citizens for Scam Alerts direct messaging alert system; hosted more than 100 scam prevention presentations across the state – directly reaching more than 6,500 Kentuckians; and received more than 800 scam-specific complaints. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=333>

May 25, 2017

### **Beshear: Steep Prescription Discounts Sign of Fake Pharmacy Scam**

FRANKFORT, KY. (May 25, 2017) – Today, Attorney General Andy Beshear issued a Scam Alert to warn of a scam targeting Kentucky families and seniors who are seeking to save money on their prescription drugs.

Staff at the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Office of Inspector General, contacted Beshear's office after intercepting a phone caller attempting to lure in an unsuspecting victim by offering well-known prescription drugs for pennies on the dollar.

Beshear said once the caller has the victim's financial information they charge hundreds of thousands of dollars in unauthorized transactions on the victim's credit card and the prescription drugs never arrive. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=331>

May 25, 2017

### **Beshear Provides Kentuckians Much-needed Transparency, Protections on Home Loans Through County Clerks' Offices**

FRANKFORT, Ky. (May 25, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear today announced that his office is providing county clerks with critical information to post in their offices for Kentuckians seeking online home mortgage details.

Beshear's recent multimillion-dollar settlement with national mortgage recording company, MERS, calls for online mortgage database guidance to be posted for Kentuckians whose banks use the MERS System instead of traditional public land records.

"Our job as public officials is to help Kentucky families, and we are providing much-needed transparency and accountability to a private mortgage registry that too often operated behind closed doors." ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=330>

May 16, 2017

### **Spoof Government Employee Email Accounts Being Used to Scam Kentuckians**

FRANKFORT, KY. (May 16, 2017) – Today, Attorney General Andy Beshear issued a Scam Alert to warn Kentuckians of an email scam that relies on spoof government employee email addresses to defraud Kentuckians.

Five recent reports to Beshear’s office indicate the spoof email appears to come from a current Kentucky state government employee and solicits money in order to receive a sweepstakes prize the consumer has supposedly won.

Beshear said the content of the message might also include an official request for personal or financial information or seek payment for an outstanding debt. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=325>

May 09, 2017

### **Beshear, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Working Together to Help Kentuckians Avoid Scams**

FRANKFORT, KY. (May 9, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear and the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service have formed a partnership to help protect Kentuckians from scams and con artists.

Beshear recently attended the Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences Conference in Owensboro to address extension agents from across the state.

Beshear said the partnership is helping to disseminate information in each community about scam prevention and helping to protect senior citizens. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=318>

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## LOUISIANA

May 31, 2017

### **Attorney General Jeff Landry Alerts Consumers to Beware of Hurricane Season Scams**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Scammers and con artists see the aftermath of a natural disaster as an opportunity to take advantage of Louisiana citizens trying to rebuild and get their lives back to normal. With June 1st marking the start of the 2017 Atlantic Hurricane Season, Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry reminds our State’s people to make sure their homes, families, and personal identities remain safe during storm season.

“Fraud awareness should be included in every consumer’s emergency preparedness plans,” said General Landry. “Unfortunately, hurricane season attracts criminals; but consumers can combat fraud by learning how to recognize and avoid common disaster-related scams.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/2417?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

May 16, 2017

### **Bill to Incentivize Fraud Detection Efforts Passes Louisiana House**

BATON ROUGE, LA – Attorney General Jeff Landry issued the following statement after the Louisiana House of Representatives passed HB 397:

"I am pleased that the Louisiana House passed this common sense bill that will allow departments to keep what they earn through their hard work. HB 397 will give departments a long term incentive to maximize their fraud detection efforts. This bill will assist the State's efforts in fighting waste, fraud, and abuse in Louisiana." ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/2411?catID=5>

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## MISSISSIPPI

May 31, 2017

### **Attorney General Announces Operation Broken Heart Ahead of Vote to Fund Cyber Crime Division**

Attorney General Jim Hood announced Operation Broken Heart Mississippi, which has already lead to the execution of 15 search warrants and 11 arrests in the past two months and announced sending an alert to all in law enforcement and victims groups asking them to contact their legislative friends to replace \$4 million to fund the Cyber Crime and Victims Compensation efforts.

Since taking office in 2004, General Hood's Cyber Crime Division has tested more than 7,000 devices for digital evidence leading to hundreds of convictions, many for child exploitation. His office is home to one of the country's leading Cyber Crime Divisions. Their success during the years highlight the continued battle against dangerous child predators and underscores the importance of continued legislative funding for this division, as well as other vital efforts to combat crime in Mississippi. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/attorney-general-announces-operation-broken-heart-ahead-of-vote-to-fund-cyber-crime-division/>

May 25, 2017

### **AG Hood, Auto Repair Task Force Release Consumer Guide for Insurance and Auto Body Repair**

Today, Attorney General Jim Hood announced the release of the Consumer's Guide to Insurance and Auto Body Repair.

The Mississippi Attorney General's Office convened the Mississippi Auto Repair Task Force in August 2016, in an attempt to give consumers some guidance on navigating the relationship between the collision repair and insurance industry. The Consumer's Guide to Insurance and Auto Body Repair addresses what consumers should expect from their insurance companies and auto body repair shops, how to choose a shop, and the different types of repair costs and warranties. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/ag-hood-auto-repair-task-force-release-consumer-guide-for-insurance-and-auto-body-repair/>

May 19, 2017

### **Free Online Program Informs Senior Citizens About Robocalls, Scams, and Latest Technology Issues**

A free online program is available next week to help senior citizens and their families learn how to prevent, identify, and respond to scams targeting elderly people, as well as how to deal with the latest barriers of technology.

Attorney General Jim Hood announced the webinar today, which coincides with Older Americans Month and is offered by the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau of the Federal Communications Commission. The webinar will provide older Americans and their family and friends with information and tips about the value of broadband connectivity (i.e., staying engaged, telehealth), dealing with robocalls, reporting suspicious calls, and benefitting from FCC rules requiring disability access to communications, including rules that require hearing aid compatibility, telecommunications relay services, emergency access, and closed captioning. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/free-online-program-informs-senior-citizens-about-robocalls-scams-and-latest-technology-issues/>

May 03, 2017

### **Attorney General Announces the Consumer Guide to Solar Power in Mississippi**

Attorney General Jim Hood is pleased to announce the creation of the Consumer's Guide to Solar Power in Mississippi.

In December 2015, the Mississippi Public Service Commission (PSC) issued a groundbreaking rule allowing net metering in the state. Net metering is the process by which individual utility customers who use solar panels or other renewable energy generators can sell their excess power back to the power companies. The electricity produced by the customers using renewable energy generators can be placed on the electric grid to offset their power bill. "Renewable energy including solar power can be beneficial to the environment while providing a costs savings for the consumer," Attorney General Hood said. "It is critical to determine whether the investment for the renewal energy in a solar system is the right choice for your home or business. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/attorney-general-announces-the-consumer-guide-to-solar-power-in-mississippi/>



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## MISSOURI

May 23, 2017

### **Attorney General's Rapid Response Team Helps Flood Victims Across The State**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Josh Hawley announced today that his office has met with nearly 1,000 Missourians across the state affected by the recent flooding. Attorney General Hawley formed a rapid response team to help victims of flooding on May 2, 2017. Since that time, the rapid response team has investigated and resolved multiple potential frauds and met with consumers at 16 locations across the state.

“I am proud of the tremendous work our attorneys have done helping Missourians get back on their feet. Now our job is to protect Missouri citizens as they begin the clean-up and rebuilding process,” Attorney General Hawley said. “Please contact my office if you believe you have been a victim of fraud. We will continue aggressively to pursue anyone who takes advantage of our consumers.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/attorney-general-s-rapid-response-team-helps-flood-victims-across-the-state>

May 02, 2017

### **AG Hawley Announces Rapid Response Team To Help Victims of Flooding**

Jefferson City, Mo. – Attorney General Josh Hawley today announced he is forming a Natural Disaster Rapid Response Team in the Attorney General's Office to help victims of the flooding that has devastated the state.

“We are mobilizing all available resources to help Missourians protect themselves and their families after this terrible flooding,” Hawley said. “Our attorneys and consumer advocates are here to help you get back on your feet. And we are here to go after scam artists and fraudsters who would prey upon the vulnerable.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-rapid-response-team-to-help-victims-of-flooding>

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## NEW JERSEY

May 16, 2017

### **Hightstown High School wins New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs 21st Annual High School Consumer Bowl**

TRENTON – After 20 competitions involving 74 New Jersey high school teams, Hightstown High School has been crowned the champion of the 21st Annual New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs High School Consumer Bowl.

With a score of 75 in the finals held today at the Hughes Justice Complex in Trenton, Hightstown took first place. Irvington High School placed second with 55 points, and Moorestown Friends School took home third with a score of 45.

The competition, waged over three rounds, was tight, with Hightstown maintaining a lead through the second and third series of questions. The lightning round, with questions on such topics as beauty parlor regulations and rent-to-own businesses, provided the Mercer County school with enough of a cushion to pull out the victory. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170516a.html>

May 09, 2017

**New Jersey Attorney General and Division of Consumer Affairs Announce Plans to Expand “Safe Care Cam” Program, Tighten Home Health Aides Rules to Enhance Protection of Elderly and Disabled**

NEWARK – Continuing their efforts to protect elderly and disabled New Jerseyans from being abused or neglected by caregivers, Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced two initiatives designed to improve oversight of their supervision, including the expansion of New Jersey’s groundbreaking “Safe Care Cam” program. In response to public requests, the Division’s new hidden-camera loan program is now open to residents who want to use the micro-surveillance equipment to keep an eye on loved ones in nursing homes and other institutional care facilities, not just in private homes, as the program was originally limited to. Extending Safe Care Cam’s reach into residential facilities permits more people to monitor how caregivers are treating their loved ones when they think no one is looking. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170509a.html>

May 08, 2017

**New Jersey Bureau of Securities Announces Annual Examination of Investment Advisers is Underway**

NEWARK – The New Jersey Bureau of Securities today announced its annual examination is underway. The Bureau, which regulates New Jersey’s securities industry, uses the online survey to oversee the more than 900 investment adviser firms registered with the Bureau. The examination seeks information regarding firm organization, business model and investment concentration, as well as information regarding the representatives associated with the firm. The Bureau analyzes the responses to determine whether to conduct a more in-depth examination and to identify areas of concern or priority. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170508a.html>

May 03, 2017

**New Jersey Attorney General, Division of Consumer Affairs Unveil Online Information Hub to Help Health Care Practitioners and Patients Understand and Comply with State’s New Opioid Prescribing Regulations**

TRENTON - Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today

unveiled an online information hub to help health care practitioners and their patients understand and comply with New Jersey’s new opioid prescribing regulations, including the widely-publicized five-day limit on initial prescriptions for opioids to treat acute pain. The new regulations, aimed at combatting the opioid epidemic, establish standards for practitioners who prescribe opioids for acute and chronic pain. To help doctors, dentists and other practitioners navigate the new prescribing landscape, the Division of Consumer Affairs has created the “Prescribing for Pain” information hub on its website to answer commonly asked questions about the regulations and provide guidelines on how to follow them. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170503a.html>

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## NEW YORK

May 24, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Introduces Legislation To Criminally Crack Down On Tenant Harassment**

ALBANY—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today introduced the Tenant Protection Act of 2017, a new bill aimed at holding New York’s most unscrupulous landlords criminally accountable for tenant harassment.

Current state law requires that prosecutors reach an inexplicably high evidentiary bar in order to criminally convict a landlord of Harassment of a Rent Regulated Tenant—which is why, in the twenty years since its initial enactment by the NYS Legislature, not a single landlord has ever been convicted of that crime. The Attorney General’s Tenant Protection Act would change that, setting a more reasonable standard that eliminates the need to prove physical injury to a tenant, and opening the door to prosecutions arising out of more commonplace and insidious tactics ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-introduces-legislation-criminally-crack-down-tenant-harassment>

May 02, 2017

### **A.G. Schneiderman Warns Against Price Gouging Amidst State Of Emergency In Broome County**

BINGHAMTON – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today issued a consumer alert warning both consumers and businesses about price gouging following this week’s storms and subsequent power outages that have impacted the Binghamton area.

General Business Law prohibits excessive increases in prices of essential goods and services like food, water, gas, generators, batteries, and flashlights, hotel lodging, and transportation during natural disasters or other events that disrupt the market. During and after severe storms, these goods and services might also include tree removal, water and flood damage repair, and other equipment and contract services for storm-related damage. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-warns-against-price-gouging-amidst-state-emergency-broome-county>

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## OHIO

May 10, 2017

### **Attorney General DeWine Warns Online Puppy Scams Reported in Ohio**

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today warned consumers to beware of online puppy scams, where sellers take money for puppies they never deliver. Con artists post pictures online advertising desirable breeds and then never provide the puppy. The Ohio Attorney General’s Office has received about 40 puppy scam complaints in 2017, with an average reported loss of about \$600.

“Con artists are very good at what they do,” Attorney General DeWine said. “They lure people in and then demand more and more money. Someone might pay \$400 for a puppy, but then the con artist comes back and says there’s also an \$800 crate fee. The person is already invested in the puppy and is more likely to pay. That’s why education and prevention are so important.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/May-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Warns-Online-Puppy-Scams-R>

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## OKLAHOMA

May 23, 2017

### **Consumer Alert: AG Hunter Urges Oklahomans to Stop Using, Purchasing LayZ Board Hoverboards**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter is urging Oklahomans to stop purchasing or using LayZ Board Hoverboards.

A letter from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is warning citizens about hoverboards manufactured by LayZ Board, Inc., after investigators found evidence a LayZ Board was to blame for a house fire on March 10, in Harrisburg, Pa. that claimed the lives of two young girls.

Attorney General Hunter said the dangerous product should not be purchased or used under any circumstance. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=32761](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=32761)

May 19, 2017

### **Attorney General Hunter Warns Oklahomans of Fraud and Scams in Wake of Severe Weather**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Agents with Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter’s Consumer Protection Unit are in Elk City today to visit with home and business owners who were impacted by severe weather this week.

Attorney General Hunter said severe weather events bring out fraudulent activity and caution Oklahomans to be aware of potential fraud.

“Having a physical presence with agents on the ground, we will be able to warn individuals in person, which will hopefully raise more awareness about potential fraud,” Hunter said. “It is unfortunate, but scammers wait for significant weather events to prey upon individuals. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=32702](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=32702)

May 01, 2017

### **Emergency Price Stabilization Act in Effect for All 77 Counties**

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter is reminding Oklahomans the Emergency Price Stabilization Act is in effect for all 77 counties, after the governor declared a state of emergency on Saturday, April 29.

The price gouging statute prohibits an increase of more than 10 percent for the price of goods and services after a state of emergency has been declared. Additionally, the act allows the attorney general to pursue charges against individuals or businesses that engage in price gouging. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

[https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom\\_article.php?id=258&article\\_id=31815](https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=31815)

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## OREGON

May 16, 2017

### **Stronger Privacy Protections Pass out of Oregon Legislature**

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today praised the Oregon legislature for passing legislation (HB 2090) that will update Oregon’s consumer law to hold companies accountable for their online privacy policies. Sen. Chuck Riley carried the bill in the Senate, and Reps. Jennifer Williamson and John Huffman carried the bill in the House. The bill will now move to the Governor’s desk.

"This new law does something very simple, but important: If a business tells you its privacy policy is going to treat your online information a certain way--and then it doesn't comply with what it told you--it's in violation of the Oregon consumer protection laws. We are living in an era where companies are happy to give out our personal data for the right price, and some are even completely disregarding their own online privacy policies," said Attorney General Rosenblum. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.doj.state.or.us/releases/Pages/2017/rel051617.aspx>

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## TEXAS

May 02, 2017

### **AG Paxton Warns Texans of Price Gouging in Wake of Disaster**

Following a weekend of severe weather and deadly tornadoes in East Texas, Attorney General Ken Paxton today warned Texans that state law prohibits price gouging in the wake of a declared disaster. A disaster proclamation was issued by Texas Governor Greg Abbott for Henderson, Rains and Van Zandt counties.

“Natural disasters can pull communities together, but, unfortunately, they can also pull in unscrupulous individuals looking to scam vulnerable citizens,” Attorney General Paxton said. “As East Texans rebuild and recover, my office will work to protect them from price gouging and any deceptive acts.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-warns-texans-of-price-gouging-in-wake-of-disaster>

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## VERMONT

May 31, 2017

### **Vermont Attorney General Launches “Scam Buster” Campaign**

AG Joins with Vermont Power Companies, Retailers to Protect Vermonters from Scammers Posing as Utilities

Vermont Attorney General TJ Donovan joined with Vermont power companies, businesses, and residents to launch a new campaign to protect Vermonters from being scammed by people pretending to be a utility.

These scammers call residents and businesses demanding immediate payment for electricity with a credit card, pre-paid card or money order. Utilities report these scams are increasing and scammers are becoming more sophisticated and tech savvy in their scams. To raise awareness and protect Vermonters, the Attorney General’s office started the “Scam Buster” campaign, reminding people to stop, ask, and confirm before they make any payment to avoid being scammed. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://ago.vermont.gov/focus/news/vermont-attorney-general-launches-scam-buster-campaign.php>