

THE STATE CENTER CONSUMER PROTECTION REPORT

August 2017

About the State Center Consumer Protection Report

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, 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.*
- *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

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Consumer Protection Cases

ARIZONA

August 11, 2017

Fake Doctor Pleads Guilty to Fraud Schemes and Illegal Control of an Enterprise

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced Craig Allen Scherf pleaded guilty to Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices and Illegal Control of an Enterprise after operating an illegal botox and laser clinic in Tempe.

Between January 2015 and January 2017, Scherf misrepresented to 13 victims that he was a doctor licensed to perform cosmetic injections and laser treatments. Scherf was able to purchase the drugs Juvederm and Botox from the manufacturer by illegally using the identity of a licensed physician.

Under the plea agreement, Scherf faces a mandatory prison sentence of 3 to 12.5 years which will be followed by supervised probation. The plea also requires Scherf to pay up to \$100,000 in restitution to his victims.

Scherf is scheduled to be sentenced on October 6, 2017, at 9am.

Assistant Attorney General Adam J Schwartz is prosecuting this case.

To view a copy of the plea agreement, [CLICK HERE](#). ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/fake-doctor-pleads-guilty-fraud-schemes-and-illegal-control-enterprise>

August 11, 2017

AZ Man Accused in Online Dating Scam Sentenced to 15.75 Years in Prison

PHOENIX - Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced a judge today sentenced Daylon Pierce to 15.75 years in prison for preying on women in an online dating scam. Pierce was sentenced after pleading guilty to two counts of Fraudulent Schemes and Artifices.

“Daylon Pierce is a career criminal and a con man who deserves to be locked up,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Unfortunately, online dating scams are becoming more common. Victims sign up hoping to find love and instead they’re left heartbroken with their life savings stolen. Our office will continue to work with the FBI to identify online dating scams and put those responsible behind bars.”

“Online dating scams can have devastating financial and emotional effects on victims,” said FBI Special Agent in Charge Michael DeLeon. “This case demonstrates the FBI and the Arizona Attorney General’s Office are committed to investigating and prosecuting criminals who target these victims.”

From February 2015 to...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/az-man-accused-online-dating-scam-sentenced-1575-years-prison>

August 31, 2017

AG Brnovich Files Lawsuit Against Opioid Manufacturer Insys Therapeutics and Three Arizona Doctors

PHOENIX – Attorney General Mark Brnovich today filed an Arizona Consumer Fraud lawsuit against opioid manufacturer Insys Therapeutics Inc., which is based in Chandler. The lawsuit alleges that Insys engaged in a fraudulent marketing scheme designed to increase the sales of Subsys, a highly addictive opioid prescription drug that contains fentanyl.

“We need to put a stop to the unethical and greedy behavior in the pharmaceutical industry that is fueling the opioid crisis in our state,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich.

Three Arizona doctors are also named in the State’s lawsuit. Steve Fanto, Nikesh Seth, and Sheldon Gingerich allegedly collected sham educational “speaker fees” in exchange for writing prescriptions for Subsys. The complaint alleges that from March 2012 to April 2017, more than \$33 million or 64 percent of Subsys sales in Arizona came from prescriptions written by Fanto, Seth, and Gingerich.

According to the lawsuit, Insys also violated the Arizona Consumer...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/ag-brnovich-files-lawsuit-against-opioid-manufacturer-insys-therapeutics-and-three>

ARKANSAS

August 08, 2017

Rutledge Reaches Settlement with Arkansas Funeral Care

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge has reached settlement against Arkansas Funeral Care and its owners for failing to provide funeral-care services in a timely, professional and respectful manner, and in some cases did not provide the services at all.

“Our loved ones deserve to be treated with the utmost dignity and respect,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Regrettably, Arkansas Funeral Care ignored this responsibility and egregiously violated the trust of Arkansans. This settlement prevents the former owners from operating in the funeral care business and provides for restitution payments to consumers.”

The Attorney General’s office received numerous complaints from affected families in which Arkansas Funeral Care did not perform various agreed-upon funeral-care services, including: failure to provide cremation services, nauseating odor of bodies that were left unrefrigerated without being embalmed, failure to provide adequate staff to transport bodies and untimely receipt of death certificates.

Arkansans reported delays in embalming that caused...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/arkansas-funeral-care-settlement/>

CALIFORNIA

August 18, 2017

Attorney General Becerra Announces Settlement That Provides Over \$51M In Debt Relief to Former Corinthian Students in California

SACRAMENTO – California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today announced a tentative settlement that provides over \$51 million in debt relief for Californians who attended Corinthian Colleges. Corinthian intentionally targeted low-income, vulnerable individuals through deceptive and false advertising that misrepresented job placement rates and school programs. These unlawful activities were enabled by Aequitas Capital Management Inc., a private equity firm currently under U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission-imposed receivership.

Federal student loans made up almost 90 percent of Corinthian’s revenue. To maintain this revenue, Corinthian needed its mostly low-income students to receive these loans. Federal rules require for-profit colleges receive at least 10 percent of their revenue from sources other than federal student aid. To help fill this gap, Aequitas and Corinthian created a financial arrangement whereby Aequitas provided private loans to Corinthian students, and Corinthian guaranteed Aequitas a profit and agreed to buy back all non-performing loans.

The result was many Corinthian students...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-announces-settlement-provides-over-51m-debt-relief>

August 29, 2017

Attorney General Becerra: California Is Preparing For Trial to Challenge Proposed Asset Sale That Could Raise Gas Prices for Californians

SACRAMENTO – Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued the following statement after a motion for preliminary injunction was denied in State of California v. Valero Energy Corporation. In this case, the State of California alleges that Valero's attempt to acquire a critical petroleum terminal in Martinez, California from Plains All American Pipeline raises significant anti-competitive concerns and could result in higher gas prices:

“As Attorney General of California, I will continue doing everything in my power to preserve a fair marketplace. If that means intervening in the proposed asset sale between Valero and Plains, then that is what we will do. In his order, U.S. District Court Judge William Alsup pointed out on numerous occasions that the State of California had raised serious questions about the potential of this transaction to lead to higher gas prices for hardworking Americans. We are now heading to trial, and our legal team is...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-california-preparing-trial-challenge-proposed-asset>

COLORADO

August 23, 2017

AG Coffman Obtains Temporary Restraining Order Against Company that Potentially Compromised Consumer Safety

DENVER- Today Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman announced that a Denver District Court Judge has granted her motion to temporarily shut down Mile High Heating & Cooling, LLC, after her office presented evidence that the defendants had performed approximately one thousand HVAC installations in consumers' homes, and had avoided seeking required building permits for the vast majority of those installations. The Court found that allowing the Defendants to continue to engage in the HVAC business would create a risk that a consumer might be exposed to carbon monoxide or that their home could explode. The temporary restraining order prevents the company and its owner, Kevin Dykman, from engaging in any activity related to the sale or installation of furnaces, boilers, hot water heaters, air conditioning units or any other type of HVAC equipment. The Attorney General's Office presented evidence that Mile High Heating & Cooling advertised "expert" HVAC services...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://coag.gov/press-room/press-releases/08-23-17>

CONNECTICUT

August 17, 2017

AG Jepsen, Consumer Counsel Katz: PURA Approves \$5M Settlement with Electric Supplier Palmco

Under a settlement agreement approved by the state Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) yesterday, electric supply company Palmco Power CT, LLC will pay \$5 million to the state of Connecticut and relinquish its electric supplier license for a period of five years, Attorney General George Jepsen and Consumer Counsel Elin Swanson Katz said.

The settlement resolves an investigation initiated in February 2015 regarding Palmco's business practices. PURA opened the investigative proceeding following a large number of consumer complaints against the company.

Evidence from the PURA proceeding showed that, from January 2011 to October 2015, Palmco systematically and repeatedly deceived consumers by providing false and misleading information about the company's rates and engaged in a pattern of abusive sales tactics. Through door-to-door marketing and telemarketing efforts, sales agents often switched consumers to Palmco without authorization, impersonated utility employees and falsely guaranteed savings. In addition, sales agents inaccurately described how the customer's variable rate...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?A=2341&Q=595456>

DELAWARE

August 14, 2017

Consumer Protection Unit Obtains Penalties Against Company For Misleading Mailings

For a second time, a Michigan-based company that sells corporate forms has reached a settlement with the Consumer Protection Unit of the Delaware Department of Justice after being alleged to have engaged in deceptive business practices in Delaware.

The latest settlement comes as the result of a complaint filed by CPU in the Court of Chancery in July 2016. In its complaint, CPU alleged the principals of the company — The Mandatory Poster Agency, Inc. d/b/a Delaware Council for Corporations — are the same three men who, under the name of a different company, entered into a cease and desist agreement with the state in 2016 for selling corporate forms to businesses using misleading materials.

Beginning in 2013, Corporate Records Service (a/k/a The Mandatory Poster Agency), led by Steven Fata, Joseph Fata, and Thomas Fata, sent deceptive and misleading solicitations to Delaware businesses. The scam involved sending a mailing that looked like...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://news.delaware.gov/2017/08/14/mpa/>

August 30, 2017

Dover Organization Ordered by Court To Stop Offering Diplomas Until It Cooperates With Investigators

Following consumer complaints, an investigation by the Department of Justice Consumer Protection Unit and a lack of response to investigative demands, a state Superior Court judge has held the Bright Rock Christian Academy and its principals in contempt and ordered the organization to stop soliciting, offering, charging for, or attempting to offer or charge for diploma or education services in Delaware until such time as it complies with the investigative demands. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://news.delaware.gov/2017/08/30/dover-organization-ordered-court-stop-offering-diplomas-cooperates-investigators/>

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

August 08, 2017

Attorney General Racine Obtains Refunds for Consumers from Company That Falsely Claimed to Resolve Debts

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today that the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) Office of Consumer Protection has reached a settlement agreement with YF Solution, LLC, a Florida-based debt-relief company, and its owner, Grace de Paz. The settlement will provide refunds to District consumers who paid YF Solution for debt-relief services but did not receive the results promised in the company’s marketing materials.

“YF Solution took advantage of District residents, sometimes charging consumers who were already deep in debt thousands of dollars for services that YF didn’t deliver,” said Attorney General Racine. “We will not tolerate predatory businesses practices that make it harder for vulnerable residents to get ahead. We are very pleased that we were able to resolve this matter before more people were harmed.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-obtains-refunds-consumers-company-falsely-claimed-resolve-debts>

FLORIDA

August 18, 2017

Multimillion Dollar Settlement with Defunct Investment Firm

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi, announced a tentative multimillion dollar settlement with Aequitas, a now defunct investment firm that engaged in a scheme to fund private student loans to Corinthian Colleges students. The settlement resolves allegations that Aequitas, through its involvement in a student loan program, engaged in deceptive and unfair practices in violation of state and federal law. As part of the settlement, Aequitas will provide more than \$18 million in debt relief to more than 4,900 Floridians who obtained private student loans to attend Corinthian Colleges. All affected students will get at least 50 percent debt relief, with the majority getting 100 percent relief.

Aequitas entered into a complex financial arrangement with the now bankrupt Corinthian Colleges to fund expensive student loans through a program called Genesis Private Student Loan Program. Aequitas allegedly funded the loans to give the false appearance that Corinthian was financially sound while leaving students...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/DC5908189A5B68B6852581800066BC92>

GEORGIA

August 18, 2017

Attorney General Chris Carr Files Suit Against Companies to Stop Unfair and Deceptive Sales Practices

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr today filed an action against The Momentum Group, Inc., doing business as Gwinnett Mitsubishi and Gwinnett Suzuki, alleging numerous unlawful and deceptive advertising and sales practices.

“The alleged deceptive acts committed by Gwinnett Mitsubishi and Gwinnet Suzuki placed a financial burden on consumers and left them without valid transportation,” says Attorney

General Chris Carr. “Through our Consumer Protection Unit, our office will continue fighting to protect Georgians from businesses who attempt to take advantage of consumers by skirting the law.”

The Complaint alleges that the dealerships:

Represented that they would apply for vehicle titles in purchasers’ names within the 30-day period required by Georgia law and failed to do so, rendering consumers unable to receive permanent vehicle tags or lawfully operate their vehicles. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-08-18/attorney-general-chris-carr-files-suit-against-companies-stop-unfair-and>

ILLINOIS

August 02, 2017

MADIGAN ANNOUNCES SETTLEMENT WITH DIRECT AUTO

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a settlement with Direct Auto Insurance Company over allegations that the company discriminated against people who have disabilities.

Madigan alleged that Direct Auto’s application and medical forms sought broad information about physical and mental health disabilities that was not relevant to Direct Auto’s underwriting practices. Madigan’s office received complaints from consumers alleging that Direct Auto revoked their policies and refused to cover accident damage solely based on a consumer’s disability status if the consumer did not disclose the disability on the insurance application and later filed an accident claim.

“Revoking or refusing to provide services to a person based on a disability is not only unacceptable but it violates the Americans with Disabilities Act,” Madigan said. “Under this settlement, Direct Auto will end its discriminatory practices and provide equal access to coverage for people with disabilities.”

Under the agreement, Direct Auto’s application will no longer...

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170802b.html

August 18, 2017

MADIGAN REACHES \$4.5 MILLION SETTLEMENT WITH DRUGMAKER INSYS FOR DECEPTIVELY SELLING & MARKETING HIGHLY ADDICTIVE OPIOID PAINKILLER

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a \$4.45 million settlement with the pharmaceutical company Insys Therapeutics Inc. (Insys) for deceptively marketing and selling a highly addictive opioid drug for an array of treatments that were not approved by the Food And Drug Administration (FDA).

The settlement resolves Madigan’s 2016 lawsuit against Insys for its sale of Subsys, which is

significantly more powerful than morphine and intended exclusively for the treatment of breakthrough cancer pain. Madigan alleged Insys deceptively promoted and sold Subsys to treat a wide variety of pain, such as back and neck pain, even though the drug was not approved for those uses.

“Insys pushed a highly addictive opioid in complete disregard for patients’ health to increase company profits,” Madigan said. “It’s unethical, greedy behavior by companies like Insys that is responsible for creating the opioid epidemic and resulting overdose deaths in our state.”...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170818.html

August 25, 2017

MADIGAN FILES LAWSUIT AGAINST ALTERNATIVE RETAIL ELECTRIC SUPPLIER FOR LURING CUSTOMERS INTO EXPENSIVE CONTRACTS

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against Sperian Energy Corp. (Sperian), an alternative retail electric supplier, for misleading customers about all aspects of the company’s costly electricity contracts, including the price, length of the contract and even the identity of the company.

Madigan’s lawsuit, filed in Cook County Circuit Court earlier today, alleged that Sperian and its sales representatives used aggressive and deceptive sales tactics to enroll customers in the ComEd territory into expensive contracts for electricity supply. Sperian sales agents failed to disclose information, including the price and length of the contracts and that customers would be charged a new monthly fee. Madigan alleged many customers were given the false impression they were signing up for a discounted rate from ComEd or that they were going to save money through a made-up energy choice program. In reality, Sperian customers routinely paid higher prices for their...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170825b.html

August 25, 2017

MADIGAN SUES COOK COUNTY CONSTRUCTION COMPANY THAT SCAMMED RESIDENTS TO LIVE EXTRAVAGANT LIFESTYLE

Chicago – Attorney General Lisa Madigan today filed a lawsuit against a Cook County construction company, its president and its chief operating officer for scamming at least two dozen area residents out of more than \$320,000 for home repair work that was either never performed or was substandard.

Madigan filed the lawsuit in Cook County Circuit Court against Katlia Construction Inc., its president Vince LaRocca and chief operating officer Mark Paulson alleging violations of the state’s Consumer Fraud and Home Repair Acts by failing to begin or complete work after being paid by customers.

“Home repair fraud remains one of the top complaints reported to my office,” Madigan said. “I

encourage people looking for a contractor or repair service to call my office and the Better Business Bureau to ask about a company’s record before hiring them.”
Madigan’s lawsuit alleged Katlia Construction required payments from customers promising that home repair work would begin...

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170825.html

IOWA

August 28, 2017

Idaho Business Agrees to Cease Misleading Solicitations to Generate Sales Leads for Insurance Agents

(DES MOINES, Iowa) An Idaho business and its owner have agreed to change how they go about generating insurance sales leads through contacts with Iowans, through an agreement with Attorney General Tom Miller.

The assurance of voluntary compliance with Boise-based Senior Supplemental Referral Service LLC, dba “Need-A-Lead,” and owner Brady Eddins, settles a dispute over whether mailings to Iowans were misleading, in violation of Iowa’s Consumer Fraud Act.

The Consumer Protection Division opened a case after a long-time investigator received a Need-A-Lead mailing at his home. The division investigated and determined that the company produced the mailings to generate sales leads and sent them to 26,000 Iowans in late 2016. The company forwarded consumer responses to insurance agents who followed up with sales pitches for funeral insurance.

The “Benefit Information” mailing, marked “time sensitive” and titled “Government Benefit Supplement Policy,” claimed to announce a “Senior Final Expense Program to help pay what Social...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/idaho-business-agrees-to-cease-misleading-solicitations-to-generate-sales-leads-for-insurance-agents/>

KENTUCKY

August 02, 2017

Attorney General Beshear Files Lawsuit against Nicholasville Car Dealership

LEXINGTON, KY. (Aug. 2, 2017) – In an effort to seek restitution for customers, Attorney General Andy Beshear filed a lawsuit today in Fayette Circuit Court against The United Group Inc., also known as Auto Plaza USA, in Nicholasville for deceptive business practices.

According to the lawsuit, the defendant, with the dealership located at 2000 Vince Rd., in Nicholasville, violated Kentucky’s Consumer Protection Act by defrauding more than 1,400

customers.

“Every Kentuckian deserves an honest and fair car buying experience,” Beshear said. “Today’s action sends a strong message that my office will defend Kentucky families against bad actors and hold dishonest businesses accountable.”

According to the lawsuit, between 2012 and 2016, the defendant collected vehicle usage taxes from customers and then falsified documents in order to avoid making the correct payment to the Kentucky Department of Revenue. As a result, customers received delinquent tax notices from the department and left owing a tax...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=373>

MAINE

August 23, 2017

Attorney General Mills announces three more supplement dealers settle claims of false and misleading sales

AUGUSTA – Maine Attorney General Janet T. Mills today announced that the last three supplement marketers have now settled the complaint her office and the Federal Trade Commission filed against nine defendants in February 2017. The federal court complaint alleged that three corporations and six individuals conducted a deceptive campaign to sell a joint health supplement and a cognitive health supplement in violation of state and federal laws.

The defendants marketed and sold two products: “Flexiprin” for joint health and “Cogniprin” for memory improvement. The complaint alleged that the defendants employed unfair and deceptive practices in advertising, marketing, distributing, and selling FlexiPrin and CogniPrin. The defendants sold these products directly to consumers, primarily through radio and print advertising nationwide and in Canada, and they grossed in excess of \$6.5 million in sales from January 1, 2012 through April 30, 2015....

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.maine.gov/ag/news/article.shtml?id=764436>

MARYLAND

August 02, 2017

Cancer Charity Ordered to Stop Soliciting in Maryland

Baltimore, MD (August 2, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Secretary of State John C. Wobensmith announced today a Cease and Desist Order has been issued against We Can Cer-Vive! and its president and founder, Mia Wright. The order follows an investigation that revealed multiple violations of the Maryland Solicitations Act, including using false and misleading advertising materials in connection with a solicitation and failing to register with the

Secretary of State before soliciting.

“Consumers who are generous enough to give shouldn’t have to worry whether their hard-earned money is being sent to sham charities,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Thanks to the work of our office and the Secretary of State’s Office, we are stopping yet another scammer from defrauding the public, and giving Marylanders the confidence that their contributions will be used by legitimate organizations.”

“Charities who deceive the public will not be permitted to solicit in Maryland,”...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/080217.pdf>

MASSACHUSETTS

August 02, 2017

Massachusetts Entities to Receive \$32 Million From Settlement With Barclays Over Manipulated Interest Rates

BOSTON – Massachusetts non-profit and governmental entities have received \$32 million as part of a settlement with Barclays Bank PLC and Barclays Capital Inc. (Barclays), including \$25 million for the state’s General Fund, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The payment to the General Fund follows a record year of recoveries by the AG’s Office to the Fund at \$79.56 million in fiscal year 2017.

“Our office’s work protects taxpayers while generating revenue for the state through our many settlements,” said AG Healey. “Following a year of record returns, the Barclays settlement will return \$25 million to the General Fund and millions more to state entities harmed by its practices.”

The AG’s Office recovered \$79,564,511 to the state’s General Fund in fiscal year 2017. In the first month of fiscal year 2018, the AG’s Office has had several major recoveries to the Fund, including \$25 million from the Barclays settlement, and from a...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-02-settlement-with-barclays.html>

August 11, 2017

AG Returns \$6.3 Million to Homeowners After Investigation of Improper Charges by Insurance Company

BOSTON – Following an investigation and audit by Attorney General Maura Healey’s Office, a major Massachusetts insurance company is paying more than \$6.3 million in refunds to more than 4,500 homeowners who were improperly charged for property insurance.

The total amount of refunds was established by an audit performed by AG Healey’s Office into the practices of American Security Insurance Company, a subsidiary of Assurant, Inc. The audit was part of a prior settlement AG Healey reached with the company regarding force-placed insurance policies. Homeowners charged for unnecessary coverage were sent settlement

checks last week.

“Our investigation found that this insurance company was charging consumers for costly and duplicative coverage,” AG Healey said. “As a result of our audit, 4,500 homeowners will be getting a check in the mail after being forced to pay for products they did not need.” Although force-placed insurance is only intended for circumstances in which the...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-11-homeowners-improper-charges.html>

August 23, 2017

AG Healey Sues to Protect Public Service Loan Forgiveness

BOSTON – Defending the rights of students pursuing public service careers, Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey today sued one of the largest federal student loan servicers in the country for undermining Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF), a federal program that forgives student loans after 10 years of public service, enabling Americans to take lower-paying jobs in public service.

The complaint links to PDF file, filed today in Suffolk Superior Court, alleges that the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)—doing business as FedLoan Servicing— violated state and federal laws by causing teachers and other public servants to lose benefits and financial assistance under PSLF and the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant program.

“This company’s actions have jeopardized the financial futures of teachers and public servants across the country,” said AG Healey. “These federal programs allow Americans from all backgrounds to dedicate their careers to serving others. My office...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-23-pheaa-lawsuit.html>

August 30, 2017

AG Healey Recovers \$210,000 for Drivers From Uber Subsidiary

BOSTON – Hundreds of Massachusetts Uber drivers have received more than \$210,000 in reimbursements and account credits after they were overcharged by a car leasing service for duplicative and erroneous tolls and related fees, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Through an assurance of discontinuance, Xchange Leasing, LLC – a subsidiary of Uber – has reimbursed 336 Massachusetts Uber drivers for the full amount of the overcharges, including a 20 percent additional payment to make drivers whole for any time or effort they put into obtaining the refunds.

“Xchange Leasing promised to help drivers earn a living, but their shoddy conduct hurt vulnerable workers,” said AG Healey. “This settlement recovers all of the improper charges for drivers.”

Xchange Leasing primarily leases vehicles to individuals who want to drive for Uber, many of

whom may otherwise be unable to obtain credit or lease a vehicle. Lease payments and related charges are typically deducted from...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-30-uber-subsiary.html>

MINNESOTA

August 16, 2017

Attorney General Lori Swanson Sues "Pension Advance" Companies That Required Veterans and Seniors to Sign Over Monthly Pensions

Attorney General Lori Swanson today filed a lawsuit against two companies that required military veterans and senior citizens to sign over significant portions of their monthly pension payments for up to ten years in exchange for loans of relatively small amounts of money to cover household emergencies and basic living expenses. The loans commonly charged annual percentage rates (APRs) of 200 percent. Because borrowers surrendered a significant portion of their future monthly pensions to the companies, the loans often exacerbated peoples' financial difficulties.

The companies issued the loans to veterans who receive military pensions or disability benefits, plus senior citizens who have pensions from private sector jobs. Examples cited in the lawsuit include

A 73-year-old disabled Vietnam veteran whose wife has stage four lung cancer borrowed \$1,800 to take care of medical and other bills and was required to repay \$14,400—eight times what he borrowed. He must pay the company \$300...

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20170816_PensionAdvance.asp

MISSOURI

August 28, 2017

AG Hawley Announces Resolution of No-Call Disputes with Charter Communications

Jefferson City, Mo. — Attorney General Josh Hawley's Office announced it has resolved its lawsuit with Charter Communications over alleged violations of state and federal No-Call and telemarketing laws.

"This office conducted a thorough investigation and achieved a resolution that we believe will benefit all Missourians by preventing future unwanted telemarketing calls," Hawley said. "I look forward to the continued cooperation of Charter in this endeavor. Protecting Missouri consumers remains a top priority for this office."

Under the settlement, Charter agreed to a monetary payment of \$225,000 and to terms

designed to prevent and quickly remedy any potential future violations. Unwanted telemarketing calls annually rank highest on the list of complaints received by the Attorney General's Office.

Missourians can register their telephone numbers with the Missouri No Call list online or by calling 866-No Call 1 (866-662-2551). Missourians have registered 4.5 million cell phone and landline numbers with the No...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-resolution-of-no-call-disputes-with-charter-communications>

August 30, 2017

AG Josh Hawley Expands Opioid Marketing Investigation to Seven Additional Pharmaceutical Companies

Jefferson City, Mo. — Missouri Attorney General Josh Hawley continues to widen his investigation of opioid manufacturers, today announcing the issuance of civil investigative demands to seven major opioid manufacturers. These investigative demands require the manufacturers to provide documents and information relevant to the Attorney General Office's ongoing investigation of the pharmaceutical industry's marketing practices for opioids. The office issued investigative demands to Allergan, Depomed, Insys, Mallinckrodt, Mylan, Pfizer, and Teva Pharmaceuticals.

"Our office is dedicated to stemming the tide of opioid abuse in Missouri," Hawley said. "We hope that our continuing investigation will aid the fight to build a healthier Missouri and end this epidemic in our state."

Today's investigative demands seek documents and information related to the companies' opioid marketing practices and their involvement with industry organizations that promoted opioids.

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-josh-hawley-expands-opioid-marketing-investigation-to-seven-additional-pharmaceutical-companies>

NEVADA

August 03, 2017

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Grand Jury Indictment Against Six Defendants for 32 Felony Counts of Fraud

Las Vegas, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Robert Milk, 38, Kenneth Johnson, 66, Curtis Acree, 53, Roosevelt Warren, 42, Kristi Milk, 36, and Joel Hendrix, 45, were indicted by the Clark County Grand Jury on 32 felony counts for operating a false tow scam out of Las Vegas along with other fraudulent acts. The charges include: offering false document for filing or record, obtaining money or property under false pretenses,

burglary, using personal identifying information of another, and mortgage lending fraud. While Robert Milk, Kenneth Johnson, Curtis Acree, Roosevelt Warren and Joel Hendrix were indicted on multiple felony counts, Kristi Milk is charged with only one count of mortgage lending fraud. The fraudulent acts were committed between November 2013 and February 2017. According to the indictment, the five male defendants filed false documents with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that claimed lienholders had been...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Grand_Jury_Indictment_Against_Six_Defendants_for_32_Felony_Counts_of_Fraud/

August 18, 2017

Attorney General Laxalt Announces 6-15 Year Sentence for man Operating Real Estate Scam out of Las Vegas

Las Vegas, NV –Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Jack Leal, 33, of Apopka, Florida, was sentenced for one count of multiple transactions of fraud or deceit in the course of an enterprise of occupation, a category “B” felony, for his role in a real estate sales scam. The fraud was committed between March 2015 and March 2016.

Leal and co-defendant Jessica Garcia operated a real estate enterprise doing business as either “Parcelnomics, LLC” or “Investment Deals,” and through that enterprise, sold properties to numerous victims. In so doing, Leal, directly and/or through others, knowingly and falsely represented that the titles to the properties were free and clear of any and all liens and other security interests.

“Fraudulent real estate scams have devastating impacts on Nevada’s homeowners,” said Laxalt. “With each prosecution of scams that prey on our communities, I hope Nevadans will recognize that they can turn...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_6-15_Year_Sentence_for_man_Operating_Real_Estate_Scam_out_of_Las_Vegas/

NEW HAMPSHIRE

August 08, 2017

Attorney General Files Consumer Protection Action Against Oxycontin Maker Purdue Pharma for Unfair or Deceptive Marketing and Business Practices

Following an investigation into the marketing of prescription opioids by Purdue Pharma, the makers of OxyContin and other opioid products, Deputy Attorney General Ann M. Rice announced today that the Office has filed a civil lawsuit on behalf of New Hampshire.

Evidence from the two-year long investigation that began in September 2015 led the Attorney General's Office to conclude that Purdue has committed numerous violations of the state's

Consumer Protection Act, Medicaid Fraud Act and other state laws and that the company should be subject to a civil enforcement action.

The 100-page civil complaint filed today in the Merrimack County Superior Court alleges that Purdue has engaged in unfair or deceptive marketing practices by, among other things: significantly downplaying the serious risk of addiction posed by OxyContin and other products; overstating the efficacy of chronic opioid therapy by claiming that OxyContin lasts for 12 hours when, for many patients, that is not...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170808-purdue-pharma.htm>

August 24, 2017

Preliminary Report Issued Concerning Project VetCare, Inc.

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announces that the attached preliminary report has been issued concerning an investigation into the use of funds at Project VetCare, Inc. Project VetCare, Inc. was established as a charitable organization formed to provide assistance to veterans in the Upper Valley region.

As detailed in the preliminary report, the Charitable Trust Unit of the Attorney General's Office received a report regarding possible diversion of Project VetCare's assets and began an investigation. The investigation ultimately established diversion of large sums of money for the benefit of the charity's executive director, her family, an employee and some members of the board of directors. Funds were diverted for such items as tickets for a Florida vacation on Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, personal household expenses such as a new heating system and oil and propane deliveries and improper loans to directors and an employee. The report details the extensive financial conflicts...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170824-report-vetcare.htm>

NEW JERSEY

August 01, 2017

Ocean County Couple and Their Home Improvement Companies Indicted for Allegedly Stealing Hundreds of Thousands of Dollars by Bilking Homeowners Whose Homes Were Badly Damaged by Superstorm Sandy

TRENTON – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino announced that an Ocean County couple was indicted today by a state grand jury for allegedly stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from more than 20 victims who hired the couple's home improvement companies to repair or rebuild their homes after Superstorm Sandy. The victims paid the couple and their firms over \$1 million, mostly in Sandy relief funds, but the couple allegedly diverted much of the money to gamble and buy luxury items, leaving homes in disrepair.

Jeffrey Colmyer, 41, and Tiffany Cimino, 33, who live together in Little Egg Harbor, N.J., were indicted today, along with their home improvement contracting companies, Rayne Construction Management Services, LLC (RCMS) and Colmyer & Sons, LLC, on charges of second-degree conspiracy, second-degree theft by failure to make required disposition of property received, two counts of second-degree financial facilitation of criminal activity (money laundering), second-degree misconduct by...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170801c.html>

August 18, 2017

New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Reaches Settlement with Middlesex County Auto Dealership in Connection with Consumer Fraud Investigation

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs today announced that a Middlesex County car dealership has agreed to pay \$136,000 and change the way it does business in order to resolve the Division’s consumer fraud investigation of the dealership’s advertising, sales, and leasing practices.

Sansone Hyundai, Inc., located on US-1 in Avenel, entered into the settlement to end the Division’s investigation of its alleged activities, including failing to disclose the total price for certain advertised vehicles, and charging consumers for aftermarket merchandise that was listed at “no charge” on certain leases and sales contracts.

“Consumers should be able to purchase a new car without having to worry about misinformation and hidden costs,” said Attorney General Porrino. “This settlement ensures that consumers will receive transparency and honesty from this dealership, as required by law.”

“Dealerships must fully disclose all costs and fees associated with the purchase or lease...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170818a.html>

August 31, 2017

New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Files Complaints Against Two Contractors, Alleging Fraud in Connection with Rebuilding and Repair of Sandy-Damaged Homes

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs have filed two complaints alleging that contractors doing business along New Jersey’s coast used deceptive practices to obtain more than \$1.3 million in federal relief funds from 12 homeowners who sought to have their damaged homes rebuilt, elevated and/or repaired after Superstorm Sandy.

The complaints, filed separately in Superior Courts in Monmouth and Ocean counties, allege that CRA Construction and Home Elevations (“CRA”), and TMB Services, LLC (“TMB”), along with the companies’ owners, violated the New Jersey Consumer Fraud Act, the Contractors’ Registration Act, the Contractor Registration Regulations, the Home Elevation Regulations, the Regulations Governing Home Improvement Practices and the Regulations Governing General Advertising.

Specifically, CRA and TMB allegedly took money from consumers, which included

Reconstruction, Rehabilitation, Elevation and Mitigation (“RREM”) funds, to renovate, rebuild and/or elevate Sandy-damaged homes and then failed to begin work and/or abandoned unfinished projects...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170831a.html>

NEW YORK

August 15, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces \$298K Settlement With New Rochelle Nissan Dealership For Illegally Charging Consumers For Bogus Theft Protection Product

NEW YORK—Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a \$298,000 settlement with Pana Nissan, LLC (d/b/a Nissan of New Rochelle) for deceptively charging hundreds of consumers for an unwanted and bogus anti-theft product that cost up to thousands of dollars per consumer. This item, known as an “after-sale” product, was often added onto the final cost of the vehicle without the consumer’s knowledge or consent, after the customer had agreed upon the purchase price of a vehicle but before the sale transaction was finalized.

“Consumers should not have to worry that they are being scammed into adding on bogus products and services when they purchase a car,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Buying a car is already a major investment for many families, and tacking on thousands of dollars extra can become a significant financial burden. I am pleased that we are able to return hundreds of thousands of dollars in restitution...”

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-298k-settlement-new-rochelle-nissan-dealership-illegally>

August 16, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces \$6.5 Million Settlement With Midtown Manhattan Timeshare That Scammed Purchasers

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a \$6.5 million settlement with the owners and operators of the Manhattan Club, a timeshare building in Midtown Manhattan, over the sponsor’s repeated false promises to potential and current share owners. The settlement is the largest in recent history for the Attorney General’s Real Estate Finance Bureau. Under the terms of the settlement, the operators of the Manhattan Club, at 200 West 56th Street, acknowledge that they repeatedly misled shareowners about the club’s reservation process, their ability to sell back their shares, and the details of the club’s state-approved offering plan.

“The owners of the Manhattan Club lured thousands of timeshare buyers with false promises and shady sales tactics that violated New York law,” said Attorney General Schneiderman.

“While timeshares can be legitimate enterprises, scams like this one are common. To avoid

becoming a victim, always be wary of high pressure sales...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-65-million-settlement-midtown-manhattan-timeshare-scammed>

August 17, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Restitution For Hundreds Of Students Duped By DeVry University

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that hundreds of students will receive restitution following the Attorney General’s investigation into DeVry Education Group, Inc. and its subsidiaries DeVry University, Inc. and DeVry/New York, Inc. (collectively, “DeVry”). The Attorney General’s investigation found that DeVry lured students with ads that exaggerated graduates’ success in finding employment and contained inadequately substantiated claims about graduates’ salary success. The Attorney General reached a \$2.25 million settlement with DeVry in January 2017.

On average, each of the 809 students will receive approximately \$2,800 in restitution. The Better Business Bureau, which is administering the restitution process, is expected to begin sending out checks to the students later this month.

“DeVry exploited students who were simply trying to further their education,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “We will not allow hardworking New Yorkers to be ripped off by greedy companies – which is why DeVry is now paying...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-restitution-hundreds-students-duped-devry-university>

August 21, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement With Nation's Largest Mall Operator To Stop Anticompetitive Tactics At Woodbury Common Outlet Center

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement with Simon Property Group that prohibits Simon from using anticompetitive tactics to thwart the development of competing outlet centers in New York City. These restrictions have impeded new outlet centers from opening, harming retailers and consumers that would have benefited from outlet locations in New York City. Simon has agreed to immediately modify contractual restrictions that have prevented retailers at its flagship Woodbury Common center from opening outlet stores in New York City locations. Today’s settlement will finally allow for the opening of outlet malls in Brooklyn, The Bronx, Queens and Staten Island, creating competitive choice for retailers and consumers while boosting the New York economy.

“No business should be allowed to stifle an entire industry at the expense of consumers—but for years, that's exactly what Simon Property Group did to New Yorkers,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “Simon's...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-settlement-nations-largest-mall-operator-stop>

August 25, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Lawsuit Against Rochester Area Contractor For Allegedly Defrauding Consumers Who Used Snow Plow And Home Improvement Services

ROCHESTER – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced legal action seeking an injunction against Brian Robinson, Owner of Apex Construction, for allegedly bilking New Yorkers out of over \$24,000. The lawsuit alleges that Robinson persistently defrauded Rochester-area consumers by demanding full or partial payments in advance for snowplowing and home improvement projects, but either failed to provide the service or completed the projects in a shoddy and unprofessional manner. Following unsatisfactory service, Robinson promised many consumers refunds but did not administer them. Today’s action would require Robinson to pay full restitution to impacted New Yorkers, in addition to a \$175,000 penalty. “New Yorkers who spend their hard-earned money to hire a contractor deserve to have the work fully completed and handled with care—not tricked into paying for services they will never receive,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “My office won’t hesitate to take action against crooked contractors and ensure that New...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-lawsuit-against-rochester-area-contractor-allegedly>

August 30, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces \$800K Settlement With Energy Service Company That Falsely Advertised Lower Utility Bills

NEW YORK—As part of a wider investigation into energy service companies, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman today announced an \$800,000 settlement with Energy Plus Holdings LLC and Energy Plus Natural Gas LLC (collectively, “Energy Plus”). An investigation found that the company lured consumers with false promises of savings, and then fleeced them with much higher bills; failed to disclose material terms such as conditions for receiving cash back; and implied that cancellations could be processed immediately. A total of \$800,000 will be available in refunds for eligible consumers as part of the settlement that also imposes new restrictions on Energy Plus’s marketing practices to prevent future frauds.

“Thousands of New Yorkers were lured by Energy Plus’s false promises of savings, only to be stuck with more expensive energy bills. Our settlement means we’ll be able to refund consumers who were illegally scammed by this company,” Attorney General Schneiderman said. “Energy service companies...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-800k-settlement-energy-service-company-falsely-advertised>

NORTH CAROLINA

August 16, 2017

Attorney General Josh Stein Returns Nearly \$80,000 to Consumers

RALEIGH, NC – Attorney General Josh Stein today announced a settlement with DriveTime Automotive Group, Inc, over allegations that the company misrepresented its pre-sale automobile inspection process and warranty coverage and engaged in aggressive debt collection practices in North Carolina. Eligible customers will receive refunds totaling \$79,933.70.

“People who are spending large amounts of their hard-earned money on their cars should not be scammed,” said Attorney General Stein. “My office will continue to hold any company that misleads people accountable for its actions.”

The settlement also prohibits DriveTime from overstating the extent of its warranty coverage and its pre-sale inspection process. In addition, DriveTime and its finance affiliate, DT Acceptance, are prohibited from communicating with consumers at their workplace when asked not to do so, as well as from communicating with anyone other than the consumer or authorized parties. ...

- **Original Press Release:** [http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/Attorney-General-Josh-Stein>Returns-Nearly-\\$80,000.aspx](http://www.ncdoj.gov/News-and-Alerts/News-Releases-and-Advisories/Attorney-General-Josh-Stein>Returns-Nearly-$80,000.aspx)

NORTH DAKOTA

August 17, 2017

TWO UNLICENSED CONTRACTORS BANNED

BISMARCK, ND - Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem has issued a cease and desist order banning Kevin Imlay and Kody Franklin, both from Crosby, ND, from conducting business in North Dakota. Imlay and Franklin had contracted to build a pole barn in Crosby.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation in April this year, after receiving a complaint about the construction project from a citizen. Investigators determined that Imlay and Franklin were not licensed as contractors. Although Imlay responded to the investigator’s initial inquiries, subsequent efforts to contact Imlay and Franklin were ignored. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://attorneygeneral.nd.gov/news/two-unlicensed-contractors-banned>

OHIO

August 02, 2017

Attorney General DeWine Seeks Restitution from Toledo-Area Home Improvement Contractor

(TOLEDO, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a home improvement contractor accused of taking money for services he never provided to consumers in northwest Ohio.

The lawsuit accuses United Roofing & Remodeling LLC and owner Josh Gardner, of Toledo, of violating Ohio consumer protection laws.

“Many home improvement contractors do a great job, but some people just don’t complete the work they were paid to do,” Attorney General DeWine said. “Our goal is to protect consumers and to hold people accountable.”

According to the lawsuit, Gardner and his company offered roof installations and other home improvement services to consumers in northwest Ohio, but after taking money from consumers, they failed to begin or to complete the work, did work that was shoddy, or in some cases caused damage to consumers’ property.

Among six unresolved complaints on file with the Ohio Attorney General’s Office or Better Business...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Seeks-Restitution-from-Tol>

August 25, 2017

Contractor Accused of Violating Ohio Consumer Protection Laws

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a Columbus-based general contractor accused of failing to deliver promised home improvement services.

The lawsuit accuses Weylin Stewart of Leadway General Contracting and Construction Managment, Inc. of taking an estimated \$30,000 from consumers but failing to complete work, provide requested refunds, and, in some cases, performing shoddy work.

Consumers who complained to the Attorney General's Office said they signed contracts and paid deposits; however, work was left incomplete.

The Attorney General’s lawsuit, filed Wednesday in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, accuses Stewart of violating Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act and Home Solicitation Sales Act. Counts include: failure to deliver, performing shoddy work, failure to give consumers notice of their right to cancel their contract, and failure to give consumers a cancellation form. In the lawsuit, the Attorney General seeks restitution for consumers and an...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Contractor-Accused-of-Violating-Ohio-Consumer-Prot>

August 28, 2017

Man Accused of Accepting Payments Without Completing Work

(MIDDLETOWN, Ohio)— Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against a Middletown company and its owner for failing to deliver promised home improvements and not providing refunds to consumers.

The lawsuit accuses Eric L. Hines, who owns and operates Hines General Contracting, of taking money from consumers, but then failing to perform the work or to provide refunds.

Consumers complained to the Attorney Generals' Office that they paid Hines thousands of dollars in deposits for work that was not completed.

The Attorney General's Office lawsuit, filed Friday in Butler County Court of Common Pleas, accuses Hines of violating Ohio's Consumer Sales Practices Act and Home Solicitation Sales Act. Counts include: failure to deliver, failure to give consumers notice of their right to cancel their contract, and failure to give consumers a cancellation form.

In the lawsuit, the Attorney General seeks restitution for consumers, an end to any violations of...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Ohio-Attorney-General-Mike-DeWine-today-announced>

August 31, 2017

Central Ohio Consultants Accused of Taking Consumers' Money for Fake Program

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a consumer protection lawsuit against a Columbus-based company accused of misrepresenting and failing to deliver promised financial services.

The lawsuit accuses Erika Taylor Consulting, Minority Credit & Finance Commission, Erika Taylor, and Kurtis Turner of failing to deliver services or refunds, promising consumers they would receive money if they paid for a background check and consulting fee, and entering into consumer transactions that they knew were not beneficial to the consumer.

Consumers who complained to the Attorney General's Office said they were were promised up to \$25,000 as a gift for participating in a financial program and collectively paid nearly \$9,500 in fees but never received the promised services or money.

The Attorney General's lawsuit, filed Wednesday in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas, accuses Taylor and Turner of violating Ohio's Consumer Sales Practice Act. Counts include: failure to deliver, misrepresentation,...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Central-Ohio-Consultants-Accused-of-Taking-Consume>

August 31, 2017

Lawsuit Seeks Reimbursement from Akron Used Car Dealer Following Title Problems

(AKRON, Ohio)—Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against an Akron used car dealer accused of failing to deliver motor vehicle titles to consumers.

The lawsuit against now-defunct Price is Right Auto Sales LLC and operator Fredrick Hill seeks reimbursement for the Title Defect Recision Fund, which helps reimburse consumers who experience title problems after buying a vehicle from a dealership. The lawsuit also seeks to prevent Hill from obtaining a used car dealer or salesperson license in the future. According to the lawsuit, Price is Right Auto Sales last operated at 2095 East Avenue in Akron. Consumers filed complaints against Price is Right Auto Sales because they did not receive their vehicle titles within the 40 days required by law. Claims totaling more than \$9,700 were paid from the Title Defect Recision Fund to resolve consumers' title issues. The lawsuit, filed in the Summit County Court of Common Pleas,...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Lawsuit-Seeks-Reimbursement-from-Akron-Used-Car-De>

PENNSYLVANIA

August 23, 2017

Attorney General Shapiro Charges Insurance Agents with Stealing \$114,000 from Clients and Selling Fake Policies in Western PA

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro today announced felony charges against 2 insurance agents in Allegheny and Westmoreland County for insurance fraud. In one case, an agent stole \$26,247 from eight clients, including their life insurance proceeds, auto insurance premiums and even a loan. In the other case, the agent submitted 252 phony Medicare supplement policy applications and pocketed \$88,636 in fraudulent commissions.

Travis Wingrove, 29, of University Drive, Dunbar, and Jeffrey Ingram, 53, of Meadow Oaks Drive, Allison Park, are charged with insurance fraud, theft by deception and identity theft. “Insurance fraud hurts consumers across our Commonwealth and causes premiums to rise for law-abiding policyholders,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “In these cases, clients trusted agents to handle their policies and they betrayed that trust. We’ll prosecute anyone who breaks the law by stealing from clients or submitting phony insurance policies for their own profit.” In Wingrove’s case, the Office of Attorney General’s Insurance...

- **Original Press Release:** https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3907

SOUTH CAROLINA

August 15, 2017

Attorney General Alan Wilson Sues Largest Opioid Manufacturer In Historic Lawsuit
(COLUMBIA, S.C.) South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson filed a historic lawsuit today

against Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin and other opioid drugs. The suit was filed in the Richland County Court of Common Pleas and alleges that Purdue unfairly and deceptively marketed opioids, which helped create and fuel South Carolina's opioid epidemic.

Opioids are prescription narcotics possessing properties similar to opium and heroin. While opioids can dampen pain, they also "can create an addictive euphoric high," the complaint alleges.

The lawsuit says Purdue violated South Carolina's Unfair Trade Practices Act, failed to comply with the terms of a 2007 consent judgment with the state for similar conduct, and created a public nuisance.

The lawsuit specifically alleges that, from 2007 onward, Purdue significantly downplayed how addictive its opioids are and also overstated the benefits of opioids compared to other forms of pain management in order to increase its market share and profits....

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.scag.gov/archives/33128>

TEXAS

August 07, 2017

Attorney General Paxton Reaches Agreement with Second Dental Supply Distributor over Anticompetitive Conduct

Attorney General Ken Paxton announced a second settlement concerning an antitrust investigation into an illegal group boycott in the dental supply market. Texas filed suit against Henry Schein, Inc. in Travis County District Court, alleging that Henry Schein violated state antitrust law. An agreed final judgment prohibits Henry Schein Dental from engaging in similar unlawful conduct. Texas settled a similar suit with Benco Dental Supply Company in 2015. "Conspiring with others to prevent new distribution channels for goods and services is contrary to the free market and violates antitrust laws," said Attorney General Paxton. "Such interference should not be tolerated in the dental supply industry or any other. My office will continue to ensure that companies doing business in Texas have the opportunity to compete in a truly free market."

The state's antitrust action stemmed from a three-year investigation into allegations that Schein and two of its competitors worked together to thwart...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/attorney-general-paxton-reaches-agreement-with-second-dental-supply-distrib>

WASHINGTON

August 31, 2017

AG Ferguson sues CHI Franciscan over price-fixing and anticompetitive Kitsap deals

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson filed a federal lawsuit today against CHI Franciscan, The Doctors Clinic and WestSound Orthopaedics seeking to undo two unlawful agreements that have raised prices and decreased competition for healthcare on the Kitsap Peninsula.

Thousands of Kitsap Peninsula patients have faced higher prices, increased wait times, difficulty in scheduling procedures, and a reduction in their choice of services and locations. As a result, CHI Franciscan has netted well over \$1 million in ill-gotten gains so far.

“These transactions were intentionally made to decrease competition, increase prices, and pad CHI Franciscan’s bottom line at the expense of its patients,” Ferguson said.

In July 2016, CHI Franciscan acquired the assets of WestSound Orthopaedics, a practice of seven orthopedic physicians based in Silverdale. Two months later, CHI Franciscan announced an affiliation with The Doctors Clinic, a multi-specialty practice with more than 50 physicians, which has seven locations throughout Kitsap County.

In the...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/ag-ferguson-sues-chi-franciscan-over-price-fixing-and-anticompetitive-kitsap>

West Virginia

August 22, 2017

Attorney General Morrisey, DHHR Win \$380K Penalty Against Illegal Pain Clinic

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, in cooperation with the state’s Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) and its Office of Health Facility Licensure and Certification (OHFLAC), won a court order enforcing a \$380,500 penalty against an illegal pain clinic.

The court order found that Dr. Yasar Aksoy, MD, engaged in severe violations of the state’s Chronic Pain Clinic Licensure Act. It further states he unlawfully operated his practice as a pain clinic without a license and ignored multiple orders to reverse course, all placing the public at risk.

“This is significant victory in the fight against opioid abuse,” Attorney General Morrisey said.

“Every stakeholder must realize the impact of addiction and do everything within their power to eliminate abuse. This victory demonstrates our commitment to ensuring just that.”

The Attorney General’s Office, on behalf of OHFLAC, filed a petition March 15 alleging Dr. Aksoy had been...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=e8e662c671>

August 29, 2017

Attorney General Morrisey Wins Court Order Against Funeral Home

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey won a court order demanding a funeral home suspend a portion of its business until it and its owners provide proper documentation to comply with a state audit.

The order requires Lobban Funeral Home and its owners, Sarah E. and Karen Lobban, to cease providing preneed funeral contracts to consumers until all obligations are met.

“Funeral homes offering preneed funeral or burial contracts must do so lawfully,” Attorney General Morrisey said. “My office is committed to protecting West Virginia consumers from potentially damaging business practices.”

In June, the Attorney General’s Office filed an enforcement action against the funeral home and its owners alleging they violated the state’s Preneed Funeral Contracts Act and Preneed Burial Contracts Rule.

The Attorney General alleged that Lobban Funeral Home, located in Alderson, failed to submit to a state-mandated audit of its records and, even after the filing...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://us7.campaign-archive1.com/?u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=ce649c2591>

Multistate Cases

Nationwide Insurance Data Breach Settlement

Date: August 9, 2017

Details: The settlement was reached with Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company and its subsidiary, Allied Property & Casualty Insurance Company, concerning an October 2012 data breach. Under the terms of the settlement, Nationwide must pay the states \$5.5 million.

The settlement requires Nationwide to take a number of steps to both generally update its security practices and to ensure the timely application of patches and other updates to its security software. Nationwide must also hire a technology officer responsible for monitoring and managing software and security updates, including supervising employees responsible for evaluating the maintenance, management and application of all security patches and software updates..

Example Press Release: <http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?A=2341&Q=595286>

Settlement Document :

http://www.ct.gov/ag/lib/ag/press_releases/2017/20170809_nationwideavc.pdf

States: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Washington, and the District of Columbia

Aequitas Settlement for Corinthian College Students

Date: August 17, 2017

Details: A coalition of state and federal agencies have reached a \$183.3 million nationwide settlement with Aequitas Capital Management, Inc., a financial services firm under SEC-imposed receivership that provided loans to students at the now-defunct Corinthian Colleges. The settlement is subject to approval by the Oregon federal court overseeing the Aequitas receivership..

Example Press Release: <https://www.doj.state.or.us/media-home/news-media-releases/ag-rosenblum-announces-192-million-aequitas-settlement-2-1-million-oregon-students/>

Proposed Settlement Document :

http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/201708_cfpb_aequitas-proposed-settlement.pdf

Fed Agency: Consumer Financial Protection Bureau

States: 13 States –including Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, New York, Texas, Washington

Medicaid Fraud

Celgene Corporation Settlement

Date: August 3, 2017

Details: This settlement with Celgene Corporation, a biopharmaceutical company, engaged in a variety of marketing schemes to promote the off-label use of two drugs, Thalomid® and Revlimid®. The company also allegedly promoted the drugs by paying kickbacks to providers in order to induce the providers to prescribe the drugs.

As part of the settlement, Celgene will pay the states and the federal government \$280 million, of which more than \$20 million will go to state Medicaid programs. The payment to the Medicaid programs will resolve civil allegations that the company unlawfully marketed the two drugs, causing false claims to be submitted to government health care programs

Example Press Release:

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/43C44E9E57CA0EA6852581710057AC4E>

States: 29 States

EpiPen Rebate Settlement

Date: August 17, 2017

Details: A \$465 million settlement between the federal government and other states was reached in principal with Mylan Inc. and its wholly-owned subsidiary, Mylan Specialty L.P. (Mylan), to resolve allegations that Mylan knowingly underpaid rebates owed to the Medicaid program for EpiPen® and EpiPen Jr.® (EpiPen) dispensed to Medicaid beneficiaries.

Example Press Release: <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-465-million-joint-state-federal-settlement-mylan-maker>

States: **FILLIN**

Medicaid Fraud

Protect Seniors' Rights in Nursing Home Contracts

August 08, 2017

Attorney General Shapiro Takes Action to Protect Seniors' Rights in Nursing Home Contracts

HARRISBURG — Continuing the fight to protect the most vulnerable Pennsylvanians from predatory business practices, Attorney General Josh Shapiro today called on the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to reject efforts to roll back protections that allow nursing home patients who have been victimized to have their day in court.

Attorney General Shapiro and 16 other Attorneys General sent comments to the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, recommending that CMS keep in place a rule that prohibits pre-dispute arbitration clauses in nursing home and long-term care contracts. Pre-dispute arbitration clauses require seniors to waive their rights to go to court to resolve any dispute

with a nursing home.

Pennsylvania is home to 2.2 million seniors and has the 5th highest number of seniors in the country, behind only Florida, Texas, New York and California.

“I have the responsibility of protecting our most vulnerable citizens, including seniors living in long-term nursing care...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3810

ALASKA

August 29, 2017

The State of Alaska files 22 charges against five individuals in a scheme to defraud the Alaska Medicaid program out of \$364,756.70

The State of Alaska today announced the filing of 22 criminal charges against siblings Victor Aldeza, Regino Aldeza, Albert Aldeza, George Aldeza and Lovelyemy Libao for a medical assistance fraud conspiracy lasting from January 2009 to March 2017. The defendants are alleged to have defrauded the Alaska Medicaid program out of approximately \$364,756.70 by R. Aldeza pretending to suffer from debilitating disabilities. This led to the Department of Health and Social Services approving his siblings to provide full-time home-based personal care assistant (PCA) services for him.

Once the fraud came to light, Investigators with the Control Unit coordinated with the Alaska State Troopers, the Anchorage Police Department, the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and Social Services, and the Dimond Mall security team. Investigators also obtained records from three Anchorage hospitals, the Alaska Court System and conducted many hours of interviews and investigation to establish that...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.law.state.ak.us/press/releases/2017/082917-MFCU.html>

ARKANSAS

August 09, 2017

Rutledge Announces Arrest of Little Rock Woman for

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the arrest of a Pulaski County woman.

Shavita Wilson, 46, of Little Rock, surrendered herself in Pulaski County District Court on three outstanding warrants. Her bond was set at \$3,000.00 and she was processed and released from the Pulaski County Detention Facility. She is charged with one count of , a Class B felony for making false statements of facts in applications for Arkansas Medicaid Program benefits

totaling \$14,899.98; one count of , a class C felony for making false statements of facts in applications for Arkansas Medicaid Program benefits totaling \$433.98; and one count of failing to maintain Medicaid records, a class D felony, all between June 2016 and April 2017.

occurs when providers use the Medicaid program to obtain money to which they are not entitled. To report or abuse or neglect in residential...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/arrest-of-little-rock-woman-for-medicaid-fraud/>

August 15, 2017

Rutledge Announces Conviction of Independence County Woman for

LITTLE ROCK – Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge today announced the conviction of a Batesville woman for . Karen Wilson pleaded guilty in Pulaski County Circuit Court and was sentenced to one year of probation and was ordered to pay a \$600 fine and court costs. Wilson paid \$2,061 in restitution to the Arkansas Medicaid Program Trust Fund prior to entry of the plea.

“Karen Wilson routinely signed timesheets, seeking to be paid for care she never provided,” said Attorney General Rutledge. “Not only was the patient harmed by not receiving care, but this type of fraud harms the entire Medicaid system. My staff of attorneys and investigators are working to investigate and prosecute this fraud across the state.”

Wilson, 48, of Batesville pleaded guilty to , a Class A misdemeanor. Wilson billed the Medicaid program for services not rendered from June to August 2016.

The case was initiated by a...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://arkansasag.gov/media-center/news-releases/medicaid-fraud-conviction-of-independence-county-woman/>

FLORIDA

August 03, 2017

Dentist Arrested for Defrauding Medicaid Out of More Than \$16,000

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Control Unit and North Miami Police Department today arrested a dentist for defrauding the Medicaid program out of more than \$16,000. According to the investigation, Fadi Yousef Qablawi, 39, fraudulently collected payments from numerous Medicaid recipients for dentures, then billed the Medicaid program for the full amount.

Qablawi faces one count of , a second-degree felony, and one count of dealing in property paid for by the Medicaid program and one count of organized scheme to defraud, both third-degree felonies. If convicted, Qablawi faces up to 25 years in prison. Attorney General Bondi’s Office of Statewide Prosecution is prosecuting this case.

The Florida Attorney General's Control Unit investigates allegations of patient abuse, neglect,

and exploitation in facilities receiving payments under the Medicaid program. Additionally, the MFCU investigates and prosecutes providers that intentionally defraud the state's Medicaid program through fraudulent billing practices. Medicaid...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/A3C7159F3A1FA25585258171006A43DF>

August 24, 2017

Manatee County Resident Arrested Third Time for Exploitation

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi's Control Unit and the Manatee County Sheriff's Office today arrested a Manatee County resident on eight felony charges related to a scheme to exploit elderly or disabled clients. According to the MFCU investigation, Makynen falsified documents in order to claim clients' security deposits for himself.

As a Supported Living Coach, David Makynen, 31, arranged for two clients to live as roommates in Makynen's residential complex. When the residential manager discovered Makynen moved his first two clients out and brought in two new clients, the manager told Makynen the clients could not be moved in on the same security deposits. Makynen then provided the manager with documents allegedly signed by the clients and attested to by witnesses, authorizing Makynen to collect the \$650 security deposits on the clients' behalf. The investigation discovered these documents to be false and revealed that the alleged witnesses never saw...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/9C09C0A7FB8531AC852581860069F9E5>

August 25, 2017

Woman Arrested for Exploiting a Disabled Adult

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Pam Bondi's Control Unit and the Leon County Sheriff's Office arrested Eboni Roshondra Montgomery Henderson for exploiting a disabled Leon County resident. According to the MFCU investigation, Henderson, 33, used the victim's Social Security and retirement funds for personal gain rather than the victim's nursing care. Henderson allegedly deposited the victim's funds directly into the defendant's bank account monthly and purchased a van with that money.

Henderson faces one count of exploitation of a disabled adult, a third-degree felony. If convicted, Henderson faces up to five years in prison and \$5,000 in fine. The Attorney General's Office will prosecute this case through an agreement with the State Attorney's Office for the Second Judicial Circuit. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/A2CD0D64CB48B7298525818700572D33>

August 31, 2017

Alachua County Caregiver Arrested for , Grand Theft, and Organized Fraud

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Control Unit and the Alachua County Sheriff’s Office today arrested a former Florida caregiver for involvement in a fraudulent billing scheme targeting Florida’s Medicaid program.

According to the MFCU investigation, Janet E. Williams, 51, allegedly submitted fraudulent timesheets and progress reports while working as a caregiver at Angel 4 U Inc., causing fraudulent billings to the Medicaid program. In some instances, Williams submitted these documents for services on days a young client was out of town or when appointments were cancelled.

Williams also allegedly engaged in a scheme to defraud a client’s parent by convincing the parent to let Williams invest money on her behalf. Williams promised a larger return on the invested funds, yet the parent never received the alleged pay out.

Williams is charged with one count of , grand theft, and organized fraud, all third-degree felonies. If convicted, Williams faces up...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/D88B499FBB9921228525818D0072DF0D>

GEORGIA

August 04, 2017

Attorney General Chris Carr Announces Settlement with United States Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr and United States Attorney for the Middle District of Georgia G.F. “Pete” Peterman, III recently announced a civil settlement with The Medical Center of Central Georgia, Inc., more commonly known as The Medical Center, Navicent Health (Navicent).

“Enforcement of the Georgia False Medicaid Claims Act is a top priority for our office,” said Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr. “We appreciate the opportunity to work with our federal law enforcement partners to protect Georgia taxpayers and pursue those who attempt to inflate the costs of the Medicaid services they are trusted to facilitate.”

Navicent agreed to pay to the United States and the State of Georgia \$2,549,742 to resolve allegations that it violated the False Claims Act and the Georgia False Medicaid Claims Act by submitting bills for ambulance transports that were either inflated or medically unnecessary. Additionally, Navicent’s current Corporate Integrity Agreement (CIA) will be...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-08-04/attorney-general-chris-carr-announces-medicaid-fraud-settlement-united>

August 08, 2017

Attorney General Chris Carr Announces Two Indicted for in Bulloch County

ATLANTA, GA—The Office of the Attorney General today announced that a Bulloch County Grand Jury charged Justine Taylor Lewis and Taylor Michelle Lewis with fourteen felony counts of and one felony count of Conspiracy to Defraud the State.

“The public relies upon the honesty and integrity of individuals who participate in the Georgia Medicaid program,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “Those who violate that trust will be prosecuted, and I applaud the efforts of our Control Unit for investigating and prosecuting this case.”

Justine Taylor Lewis owned and operated Gerdie and Lousie Personal Care Home doing business as Gerdie and Lousie Transportation, located in Statesboro. Gerdie and Lousie purported to provide non-emergency transportation services to Medicaid members.

Between January 27, 2012 and July 17, 2015, Justine Taylor Lewis contracted with a Medicaid non-emergency transportation broker. The charges allege that Justine Taylor Lewis and Taylor Michelle Lewis caused fraudulent billings...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-08-08/attorney-general-chris-carr-announces-two-indicted-medicaid-fraud-bulloch>

KANSAS

August 07, 2017

AG Derek Schmidt: Delphos man charged with sex crimes against a dependent adult,

TOPEKA – (August 7, 2017) – A Delphos man has been charged with sex crimes against a dependent adult and , Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Schmidt today filed criminal charges against Thomas James Tholstrup, 25, in connection with an incident alleged to have occurred last week in Cloud County. The charges are one count of aggravated criminal sodomy, one count of and one count of mistreatment of a dependent adult. Based upon the investigation to date, there is no reason to suspect that there are additional victims. The investigation remains ongoing.

The case is set for a first appearance in Cloud County District Court on August 23 at 9 a.m. Criminal charges are merely accusations; individuals are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/08/07/ag-derek-schmidt-delphos-man-charged-with-sex-crimes-against-a-dependent-adult-medicaid-fraud>

MARYLAND

August 10, 2017

Attorney General Frosh Announces Indictments Stemming From Multi-Agency, Multi-Jurisdictional Crackdown on Pill Mill Operators

BALTIMORE, MD (August 10, 2017) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced the indictments of Kofi Shaw-Taylor and nine co-conspirators, and Hasan H. Babaturk for the alleged unlawful distribution of controlled dangerous substances, and operating as “pill mills.” Defendant Babaturk faces 21 counts of drug distribution and improper dispensing charges. Defendant Shaw-Taylor faces 289 counts of conspiracy to commit drug distribution, and other charges.

The indictments and arrests of Kofi Shaw-Taylor and his co-defendants come as a result of a collaborative investigation between the Maryland Office of the Attorney General, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General.

The indictment and arrest of Hasan Babaturk comes as the result of a joint investigation between the Maryland Office of the Attorney General and the Baltimore County Police Department. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/081017.pdf>

August 28, 2017

St. Mary’s County Woman Sentenced for Stealing Funds From Patients

BALTIMORE, MD (August 28, 2017)–Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Anita Nelson, 42, of Great Mills, pleaded guilty to the charge that she stole personal funds from residents of a facility that provides services for developmentally disabled adults.

Saint Mary’s County Circuit Court Judge Karen H. Abrahms sentenced Nelson to two years’ incarceration, all suspended, and 80 hours community service. Judge Abrahms also placed Nelson on two years’ probation and ordered that she not work as or with any provider in a federally funded health care program for five years.

Nelson was employed as an operations manager at Bay-CSS, a residential and day program facility that provides services for developmentally disabled adults. In addition to providing housing and related services, Bay-CSS manages personal funds for some of their residents. Nelson was responsible for providing oversight of operations at several of Bay-CSS’s residential homes. ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/082817.pdf>

August 28, 2017

Anne Arundel County Man Guilty of Felony

BALTIMORE, MD (August 28, 2017) –Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh announced today that Bruce Reid, 50, of Anne Arundel County, was found guilty on four counts of felony and four counts of felony theft for fraudulent billings to the Medicaid program for mental

health therapy services. Felony is punishable by up to five years' incarceration and up to a \$100,000.00 fine for each offense. Felony Theft Over \$10,000 is punishable by up to 15 years' incarceration and up to a \$15,000 fine.

Bruce Reid, LCSW-C is an individual provider of mental health services to Medicaid recipients. Medicaid is a healthcare program for families and children and certain other individuals who qualify based on income levels, disability and certain other circumstances. Anne Arundel County Circuit Court Judge Stacy W. McCormack has scheduled sentencing for October 2, 2017. In making today's announcement, Attorney General Frosh thanked Assistant Attorney General...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2017/082817a.pdf>

MASSACHUSETTS

August 09, 2017

Health Care Company That Improperly Billed Hundreds of Masshealth Members Paying More Than \$750,000

BOSTON – A nationwide provider of home healthcare products will pay more than \$750,000 for directly billing people for services covered by the state's Medicaid program (MassHealth), Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Today's settlement provides refunds to hundreds of affected MassHealth members.

Under the terms of the assurance of discontinuance and related settlement agreement, Apria Healthcare LLC (Apria) has agreed to pay \$99,008 in restitution and \$665,934 in penalties to resolve allegations that the company directly billed members for services that were already covered by MassHealth.

"MassHealth provides critical healthcare to low-income individuals, including people with disabilities, children and senior citizens, yet this company billed them for services that were already covered," AG Healey said. "Through our settlement with Apria, hundreds of members who paid bills they did not owe will get their money back."

Apria provides medical services and devices, including durable medical equipment, to MassHealth members and has two Massachusetts locations...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-09-health-care-company.html>

August 21, 2017

AG Healey Returns \$500,000 to Masshealth in Settlement With Springfield Dentist Over Alleged Improper Billing

BOSTON – Attorney General Maura Healey announced today that her office has reached a settlement with a pediatric dentist in Springfield, returning \$500,000 to the state's Medicaid program (MassHealth) and resolving claims that the dentist improperly billed the program for

services.

The settlement agreement resolves allegations that Dr. Annie Watson, DDS and her dental practice, Gentle Smiles, LLC, improperly billed MassHealth for palliative care (emergency pain treatment) between March 2010 and June 2013, and failed to comply with MassHealth rules associated with the use of that emergency treatment billing code.

The AG's Office began an investigation into Dr. Watson and Gentle Smiles upon a referral from MassHealth, which identified Dr. Watson as the top biller of the palliative care code among all MassHealth dental providers.

Palliative care is the emergency treatment of dental pain that relieves the pain but is not curative and can include draining of an abscess or prescribing pain...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.mass.gov/ago/news-and-updates/press-releases/2017/2017-08-21-masshealth-settlement-dentist.html>

MISSOURI

August 23, 2017

AG Hawley Announces Mount Vernon Dentist Charged with Defrauding Medicaid

Jefferson City, Mo. — Attorney General Joshua Hawley today announced that his office, along with Lawrence County Prosecutor Don Trotter, has filed criminal charges against Dr. Thomas Alms, DDS.

The complaint charges that Dr. Alms of Mount Vernon, Missouri, committed three felony counts of , and one felony count of obstructing a investigation. The complaint alleges that Dr. Alms billed Medicaid for dental services that he did not provide including office visits, pulp vitality tests, pre-orthodontic visits, bone grafting by quadrant, and multi-sided tooth restorations. Additionally, the complaint alleges that in the course of Attorney General Hawley's Control Unit's investigation, Dr. Alms provided false documentation to investigators. "Criminal actions like these alleged against Dr. Alms will not be tolerated," Hawley said. "My office is firm in its commitment to protect Missourians from fraudulent actions that cost taxpayer money." ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/news-archives/2017-news-archives/ag-hawley-announces-mount-vernon-dentist-charged-with-defrauding-medicaid>

NEBRASKA

August 31, 2017

Omaha Woman Ordered to Pay State for Undocumented Medicaid Claims

Lincoln--Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson announced today that an Omaha woman has been ordered to pay the State of Nebraska more than \$400,000 for Medicaid claims that

she could not document.

Chandra Wrightsell, owner of Evol Consulting, submitted more than 1,300 claims to the Nebraska Medicaid program but did not have any documentation to show that the services were ever rendered. She was paid more than \$146,000 on those claims.

A Lancaster County District Court judge ordered Wrightsell to pay three times the amount of what she received, which totals \$439,777. The judgement was tripled according to the Nebraska False Medicaid Claims Act.

Earlier this week, Wrightsell was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison and ordered to repay another \$105,000 in criminal restitution arising from the same fraud scheme. Wrightsell pled guilty to one count of health care fraud earlier this year.

The Attorney General's and Patient Abuse Unit investigated the...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ago.nebraska.gov/news/omaha-woman-ordered-pay-state-undocumented-medicaid-claims>

NEVADA

August 02, 2017

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Home Health Worker

Reno, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Norma Dickenson, 60, of Reno, was sentenced in a case involving the failure to maintain required documentation. The fraud occurred between December 2015 and April 2016.

Second Judicial District Court Judge Patrick Flanagan sentenced Dickenson to one count of intentional failure to maintain adequate records, a gross misdemeanor. As a part of the sentence, Dickenson was ordered to serve a term of 364 days incarceration and to pay restitution of \$2,703. Dickenson's sentence was suspended, and she was placed on probation for a period of three years.

"Ensuring that Medicaid recipients are receiving the home health care they are approved for is important," Laxalt said. "These convictions ensure that persons committing fraud are excluded from the Medicaid system and ensures Medicaid recipients are receiving the services they need."

The investigation began after the Control Unit (MFCU) received...

- **Original Press Release:** http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Sentencing_of_Home_Health_Worker/

August 10, 2017

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Employee of Medicaid Provider

Las Vegas, NV – Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Tiffany Simmons, 41, of Las Vegas, was sentenced today in a case involving the failure to maintain required

documentation.

Simmons was sentenced for one gross misdemeanor offense of Intentional Failure to Maintain Adequate Records by District Court Judge Jennifer Togliatti. Togliatti sentenced Simmons to 364 days incarceration, suspended, performance of 40 hours of community service and payment of \$48,430 in restitution. The fraud occurred between July 2015 and February 2016.

“Tiffany Simmons used her position as an office manager to obtain money for her own benefit,” said Laxalt. “These monies are needed by Medicaid to ensure that necessary services are being provided to Nevada’s Medicaid recipients.”

The investigation began after the Control Unit (MFCU) received information that Simmons was causing the submission of false claims through her position as office manager at Aaron Williams Therapy, LLC (AWT)....

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Sentencing_of_Employee_of_Medicaid_Provider/

August 30, 2017

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Former Medicaid Provider

Las Vegas, NV – Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Tamara McManigell, 47, formerly of Las Vegas, was sentenced in a case involving the failure to maintain required documentation. The fraud occurred between January 2014 and January 2015.

Eighth Judicial District Court Judge Douglas Smith sentenced McManigell to one count of intentional failure to maintain adequate records, a gross misdemeanor. As a part of the sentence, McManigell was ordered to serve a term of 364 days incarceration and to pay restitution of \$33,668. Her sentence was suspended, and she was placed on probation for a period of 3 years.

“My office continues to take a strong stance against those committing Medicaid provider fraud,” said Laxalt. “These convictions ensure Medicaid dollars are available for recipients in need, and assist the State in holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.”

The investigation began after the Control Unit (MFCU) received...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://ag.nv.gov/News/PR/2017/Attorney_General_Laxalt_Announces_Sentencing_of_Former_Medicaid_Provider/

NEW HAMPSHIRE

August 04, 2017

Attorney General Announces Medicaid Settlement with Celgene Corporation

Attorney General Gordon J. MacDonald announces that New Hampshire will receive \$70,808.24

in restitution and other recoveries from the Celgene Corporation (Celgene). New Hampshire has joined with other states and the federal government to settle allegations that Celgene engaged in a variety of marketing schemes to promote the use of its drugs Thalomid® and Revlimid® for off-label use and paid kickbacks to providers in order to induce them to prescribe those drugs. Celgene, a New Jersey based company, will pay the states and the federal government \$280 million. Of that amount, more than \$20 million will go to State Medicaid programs to resolve civil allegations that the company unlawfully marketed the drugs through its off-label promotion and payment of kickbacks to prescribers.

Specifically, this settlement resolves allegations that Celgene unlawfully marketed Thalomid® and Revlimid® for a variety of off-label uses prior to FDA approval as well as for uses not covered...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170804-celgene.htm>

NEW JERSEY

August 14, 2017

Essex County Pediatrician Sentenced to Prison for

TRENTON – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Office of Insurance Fraud Prosecutor announced today that an Essex County pediatrician has been sentenced to three years in state prison for submitting fraudulent claims to the Medicaid Program through which she falsely billed for working 24 hours or more a day.

Ibilola Ighama-Amegor, 55, whose Quality Pediatrix practice is located in Newark, must also pay \$216,000 in restitution under a sentence handed down by Superior Court Judge Michael Petrolle in Newark on Friday.

Following a five-week jury trial in June, a jury found Amegor guilty of 48 counts of health care claims fraud and one count of , all in the third degree. Amegor was acquitted of second-degree theft by deception.

Deputy Attorneys General Crystal Callahan and Dennis Kwasnik tried the case for the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor’s Control Unit. ...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170814a.html>

August 21, 2017

Owner of Hudson County Medical Equipment Supply Store Pleads Guilty To \$100,000 from Scam

TRENTON –Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (OIFP) announced today that the owner of a Hudson County medical equipment supply store has pleaded guilty to fraudulently billing the Medicaid program more than \$100,000 for medical supplies never provided to patients.

Alfredo Valdes, Jr., who owns T-N-T medical supplies in West New York, pleaded guilty to second-degree charges of health care claims fraud and theft by deception in a hearing before Superior Court Judge Mitzy Galis-Menendez in Hudson County. Under the terms of the plea agreement, the State will recommend that the 42-year-old Clifton resident be sentenced to four years in state prison. Valdes will also pay \$101,000 in restitution to Horizon New Jersey Health, and sign a consent order agreeing to lifetime disbarment from participation as a provider in the New Jersey Medicaid program.

“Stealing from a program that provides financial assistance to those who...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170821b.html>

NEW YORK

August 15, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces 5-Month Jail Sentence For Unlicensed Dentist Following “Operation Toothache”

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that Alexander Hollander, of Brooklyn, New York, was sentenced in Kings County Supreme Court to five months in jail and an additional five years of probation, and ordered to pay a \$10,000 fine, after being found guilty by a jury for Unauthorized Practice of a Profession (Dentistry), a Class E Felony. Through an undercover investigation—coined “Operation Toothache”—that ultimately led to the defendant’s conviction, the Attorney General’s Control Unit (MFCU) discovered that, despite losing his license to practice dentistry following an earlier conviction for fraud, Hollander continued to practice dentistry in Brooklyn. Hollander lost his license to practice dentistry in June 2000, following his conviction for Grand Larceny in the Third Degree, Perjury in the First Degree, and other felonies involving . As part of the prior case, which was also handled by MFCU, Hollander was ordered to...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-5-month-jail-sentence-unlicensed-dentist-following-operation>

NEW YORK

August 24, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Civil Suit And Criminal Charges Against Pharmacy Owner For Allegedly Defrauding Medicaid Of Millions

NEW YORK – Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a lawsuit and criminal charges against pharmacist Hin T. Wong, 49, of Manhattan, and NY Pharmacy, Inc. (“NY Pharmacy”) for allegedly defrauding the New York State Medicaid program out of millions of dollars. Wong, a licensed pharmacist and owner of NY Pharmacy, located at 131 Walker Street

in Manhattan, allegedly paid undercover agents posing as Medicaid recipients kickbacks for HIV prescriptions and for referring other Medicaid recipients to bring their prescriptions to NY Pharmacy. Wong and NY Pharmacy also allegedly billed and were eventually paid over \$60,000 by Medicaid for refills on prescriptions submitted by undercover agents that NY Pharmacy either did not dispense or were predicated on the payment of a kickback. Various state laws and Medicaid regulations prohibit the payment of kickbacks for the referral of patients or individual prescriptions. In addition, the Attorney General also announced the...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-announces-civil-suit-and-criminal-charges-against-pharmacy-owner>

OKLAHOMA

August 11, 2017

Attorney General Hunter's Control Unit Charges Mother-Daughter Duo

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter's Control Unit has filed charges on a mother and daughter who allegedly ran multiple schemes from their behavioral health counseling company.

Lexie Batchelor, 59, of Atoka, is charged with three counts of and one count of identity theft, and Heather Doss, 43, of Tulsa is charged with one count of and one count of identity theft.

According to court documents, between 2010 and 2016, the two were submitting false claims to the Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) in numerous ways.

Both Batchelor and Doss submitted claims for services that took place in Oklahoma clinics, when airline records reflected both were out of state.

Batchelor and Doss are also accused of fraudulently using client Medicaid identification numbers to submit false claims. Agents found 197 client identities fraudulently used to submit claims. ...

- **Original Press Release:** https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=34688

Consumer Advocacy

Hurricane Harvey & Natural Disaster Charity Fraud Alerts

Fake Facebook pages and scam charity websites have been set up asking for donations to Hurricane Harvey relief funds to help those impacted by the flooding in Texas.

Alaska: http://www.law.state.ak.us/press/consumer_alerts/2017/0817-Harvey.html

Arizona: <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/scam-alert-hurricane-harvey-charity-fraud>

Colorado: <https://coag.gov/press-room/press-releases/08-28-17>

District of Columbia: <https://oag.dc.gov/release/attorney-general-racine-warns-about-disaster-relief-charity-scams-wake-hurricane-harve>

Florida:

<http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/B69711028E7DB2D28525818B005C27E7>

Indiana: <https://calendar.in.gov/site/oag/event/helpful-hoosiers-should-also-be-vigilant-in-the-wake-of-hurricane-harvey/>

Iowa: <https://www.iowaattorneygeneral.gov/newsroom/give-wisely-to-hurricane-harvey-victims/>

Kansas: <https://ag.ks.gov/media-center/news-releases/2017/08/31/consumer-alert-use-caution-when-directing-disaster-donations>

Kentucky: <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=389>

Louisiana: <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/2448?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

Maine: <http://www.maine.gov/ag/news/article.shtml?id=764997>

Michigan: http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-430897--,00.html

Nebraska: <https://ago.nebraska.gov/news/ag-peterson-reminds-nebraskans-donate-wisely-following-hurricane-harvey>

New Hampshire: <https://www.doj.nh.gov/media-center/press-releases/2017/20170829-hurricane-harvey.htm>

New Jersey: <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170830b.html>

New York: <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-issues-consumer-alert-charitable-giving-response-hurricane-harve>

Ohio: <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Offers-Charitable-Giving-T>

Oregon: https://www.doj.state.or.us/media-home/news-media-releases/beware-hurricane-harvey-scams/?sf_paged=2

Rhode Island: <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/31275>

South Dakota: <http://atg.sd.gov/OurOffice/Media/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?id=1854>

Virginia: <http://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1022-august-30-2017-attorney-general-herring-warns-virginians-to-be-cautious-when-donating-to-assist-victims-of-hurricane-harvey>

West Virginia: <http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=1010c46194>

ARIZONA

August 03, 2017

AG Brnovich Featured in PSA Warning about Downloading Malware

PHOENIX - In a new PSA, Attorney General Brnovich is warning consumers to protect their personal information and be aware that hackers are using “pirate websites” to illegally distribute copyrighted content and infect computers. Dangerous malware can lead to identity theft and financial harm. To view the PSA, [CLICK HERE](#) (link is external).

“It may sound like something out of a movie, but cybersecurity is one of the greatest threats facing consumers today,” said Attorney General Mark Brnovich. “Now more than ever, consumers need to think before they download anything off of the internet, especially from untrusted websites. It’s important for families to have conversations about the dangers of accessing websites with illegal media content.”

A recent study found that 1 in 3 content theft websites exposed users to malware exploitable by criminals. Almost half of the malware was delivered via “drive-by” downloads, meaning an unintentional download of a virus that is delivered...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.azag.gov/press-release/ag-brnovich-featured-psa-warning-about-downloading-malware>

CALIFORNIA

August 07, 2017

Attorney General Becerra Issues Consumer Alert on Price Gouging Following State of Emergency in Modoc County

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a consumer alert following the Governor’s declaration of a state of emergency in Modoc County. Modoc County is currently dealing with multiple fires that have burned thousands of acres and forced residents to evacuate their homes. Attorney General Becerra reminds all Californians that price gouging during a state of emergency is illegal under Penal Code Section 396.

“Families in Modoc County are in need of help right now,” said Attorney General Becerra. “They should not have to worry about whether they’re being sold goods or services at an inflated rate. Unfortunately, too often, some engage in price gouging and line their own pockets at the expense of those who are suffering. Let me be clear: doing so is not just fundamentally wrong, it’s also illegal. As the top law enforcement officer in California, I encourage anyone who has been the victim of price gouging,...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-issues-consumer-alert-price-gouging-following-state-0>

CALIFORNIA

August 28, 2017

As the New School Year Begins, Attorney General Becerra Issues Guide for Parents to Help Protect Children from Identity Theft

SACRAMENTO – As the new school year begins across the State, California Attorney General Xavier Becerra today issued a guide to help parents protect their children under the age of 16 from being the victims of identity theft. The guide helps parents place a “security freeze” on credit records in their child’s name and is the strongest defense against certain types of identity theft. Previously available only to California adults, the freeze option is now extended to children under the age of 16 as the result of a law that took effect in 2017.

“As parents and guardians, it is our duty to protect our children. Today that includes safeguarding their personal information from identity thieves,” said Attorney General Becerra. “A security freeze can shield our children’s identities from being exploited by unscrupulous thieves. We must protect our children from identity theft today, so that it does not drastically disrupt their...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/new-school-year-begins-attorney-general-becerra-issues-guide-parents-help>

FLORIDA

August 01, 2017

Information for Consumers Affected by Closing of Alfred Angelo Bridal Stores

TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—The Florida Attorney General’s Office today released information to assist consumers affected by the recent closing of national retailer Alfred Angelo’s bridal stores. On July 14, 2017, the company filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy and closed its Delray Beach headquarters and 61 stores across the country. The sudden closing left consumers with more questions than answers regarding items purchased.

The Attorney General’s Office set up an online resource, to share tips and information that will assist those affected by Alfred Angelo’s closing. Click here to view to the page that includes important information regarding the latest developments in the bankruptcy case and instructions for those with questions about the status of their dress order and other account questions.

AlfredAngelo.com will soon include copies of motions, notices and orders in the Alfred Angelo bankruptcy case, which will allow consumers to view these documents.

Consumers dealing with companies that file Chapter 7 bankruptcy can file...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/1BCA119A2DF745A98525816F0072D0DA>

GEORGIA

August 17, 2017

CONSUMER ALERT: Make Sure Your Solar Eclipse Glasses Are the Real Deal

ATLANTA, GA – Attorney General Chris Carr is offering tips for consumers who are excitedly anticipating the solar eclipse on Monday, August 21, 2017.

“Safely viewing the solar eclipse without sustaining eye damage has, unfortunately, gotten more complicated since reports came out of counterfeit eclipse glasses being sold,” said Attorney General Chris Carr. “Counterfeit glasses may not offer sufficient protection from the sun and can lead to eye damage; therefore, we want to make sure that consumers take proper precautions so they can enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime occurrence.”

Do not view the sun without special eyewear. According to NASA, it is only safe to look directly at the sun if you have approved solar eclipse glasses or a hand-held solar viewer. No matter how dark they are, regular sunglasses will NOT protect your eyes from sun damage.

Get eclipse glasses from a reputable source. Check with your local library to see...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://law.georgia.gov/press-releases/2017-08-17/consumer-alert-make-sure-your-solar-eclipse-glasses-are-real-deal>

IDAHO

August 16, 2017

Attorney General Releases Consumer Protection Division’s FY 2017 Report

(Boise) – Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has released his latest Consumer Protection Division (CPD) report. The annual summary represents a detailed look at the division’s work between July 2016 and June 2017. Most notably, the report includes the latest figures on Volkswagen’s payouts to Idaho customers after the company settled allegations that it violated consumer protection laws by misrepresenting the emissions outputs of certain vehicle models. To date, Volkswagen has paid \$49,148,753 to nearly 2500 Idaho customers, which includes reimbursement for vehicles as well as restitution. Restitution payments total \$12 million. The division also recorded more than 13,600 contacts with consumers, recovered a record amount of consumer restitution, participated in a multistate settlement with Moody’s that resulted in a nearly \$7.5 million payment to the State of Idaho, and conducted a thorough review of a proposed \$109 million sale of St. Joseph Regional Medical Center in Lewiston. “The work of the Attorney...

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.ag.idaho.gov/media/newsReleases/2017/nr_08162017.html

ILLINOIS

August 16, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN CONVENES STUDENT LOAN FORUM IN CHAMPAIGN & URGES GOVERNOR TO SIGN STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today convened a student loan forum with education advocates and social service organizations and urged Gov. Rauner to sign into law a bill to reform the student loan 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 her investigation and lawsuit against one of the country’s largest student loan servicing companies, Navient.

Senate Bill 1351, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Biss and Rep. Will Guzzardi and drafted with Madigan’s office, would create a Student Loan Bill of Rights to better protect borrowers from abuses in the student loan industry.

“Fraudulent practices by student loan companies have created more difficult and more expensive paths to repayment for student loan borrowers across Illinois,” Madigan said. “The Student Loan Bill of Rights will prevent abuse by student loan companies and make our state a...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170816.html

August 17, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN WARNS ILLINOIS RESIDENTS TO SCAMS TIED TO UPCOMING SOLAR ECLIPSE

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today issued a consumer alert warning Illinois residents to reports of scam artists selling counterfeit solar eclipse glasses to try to take advantage of the many people planning to watch the upcoming total solar eclipse.

On Monday, the solar eclipse will be visible to millions of Americans, particularly southern Illinois residents near Makanda, Ill., the epicenter of the eclipse. The nearby city of Carbondale is expecting hundreds of thousands of visitors to view the eclipse. Except for a brief period when the moon covers the sun in total, NASA urges anyone watching the eclipse to wear “eclipse glasses” that have special solar filters to prevent unsafe exposure to sunlight. In the lead up to the eclipse, fake glasses have reportedly flooded the market and led to consumers across the country receiving refunds for glasses that do not meet the safety standard for viewing the eclipse.

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170817.html

August 25, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL MADIGAN: GOVERNOR FAILS TO PROTECT STUDENT LOAN BORROWERS FROM DECEPTIVE STUDENT LOAN COMPANIES

Chicago — Attorney General Lisa Madigan today denounced Governor Rauner's veto of the Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights that was passed to crack down on the student loan servicing industry that has made it more difficult and more expensive for Illinois borrowers to repay their loans. Madigan encouraged the General Assembly to override the governor's veto and protect borrowers, their families and the state's economy.

The Illinois Student Loan Bill of Rights, Senate Bill 1351, was drafted by Madigan's office and sponsored by Sen. Daniel Biss and Rep. Will Guzzardi to address widespread abuses and failures in the student loan industry. These abuses were revealed by Madigan's investigation and lawsuit against one of the country's largest student loan servicing companies, Navient.

"Today Gov. Rauner failed to stand up for struggling student loan borrowers, their families and our state's economy. His veto of the Student Loan Bill of Rights shows he doesn't...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2017_08/20170825c.html

KENTUCKY

August 24, 2017

Beshear Warns of IRS Scams Targeting Western Kentuckians

FRANKFORT, KY. (Aug. 24, 2017) – Attorney General Andy Beshear issued a scam alert today to help Kentucky families avoid falling victim to Internal Revenue Service (IRS) scams.

Beshear said his office issued a scam alert after receiving multiple IRS scam reports from Kentuckians in Murray and Calloway County over the past 24 hours.

Local residents report receiving a call from a New York phone number, where the caller claims to be an IRS agent and demands immediate payment over the phone. If the victim refuses, the scam caller threatens that law enforcement will be contacting them for possible prosecution, arrest or deportation.

"The IRS will never call and demand immediate payment over the phone," Beshear said. "If you are contacted by someone claiming to be an IRS agent and threatening arrest, hang-up and report it to the actual IRS."

Reports are currently coming in from Western Kentucky, but all Kentuckians can avoid falling...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=387>

LOUISIANA

August 22, 2017

Attorney General Jeff Landry's Office Educating College Students on Fair Housing

BATON ROUGE, LA – College students rushing to rent space this fall semester should find the time to read Attorney General Jeff Landry's consumer guide on navigating Louisiana's landlord and tenant laws.

General Landry said his office often receives questions and reports involving landlord and tenant disputes.

"Education is the best way to address these types of issues and gives consumers the answers they need," said General Landry. "Our guide contains information on a variety of topics ranging from security deposits to eviction notices."

The guide – Moving In, Moving Out, and Everything in Between – offers information on deposits, leases, maintenance and repairs, improvements, pet deposits, and eviction proceedings. There is even a sample checklist for tenants and landlords to note any faults present before occupancy. Details about military termination rights and federal housing laws are also outlined in the guide.

General Landry encourages both landlords and tenants to keep the following points...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/2445?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

LOUISIANA

August 25, 2017

State of Emergency Declaration Puts Price Gouging Laws in Effect

BATON ROUGE, LA – With the Governor declaring a state of emergency ahead of Hurricane Harvey making landfall, Attorney General Jeff Landry encourages Louisiana consumers to be conscious of price gouging.

"It is an unfortunate reality that some people and businesses attempt to take advantage of consumers during and after natural disasters," said General Landry. "I strongly encourage consumers who suspect price gouging to contact their local law enforcement agencies."

Price gouging is defined as the increase in prices or value for goods and services that are higher than the prices ordinarily charged for comparable goods and services at or immediately before the time of a state of emergency. Once a state of emergency is declared by the governor or parish president, a price gouging ban is placed on the area declared to be under the state of emergency. The ban may remain in effect for up to 30 days after...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx/2446?TypeId=1&CatId=3>

MICHIGAN

August 01, 2017

Schuette Encourages Attendance at August Consumer Education Programs

LANSING – Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today encouraged Michigan residents to attend at least one of the 47 community seminars offered through his office this August. With six different programs, the Consumer Protection Division will host events across the state, beginning August 4.

“As summer slowly comes to an end, a lot of Michigan residents are thinking through important decisions about the upcoming school year,” said Schuette. “These programs are designed to help keep families, businesses, senior citizens – all Michigan consumers – informed and safe when they make a decision, whether it be about their finances, personal information, or social media presence.”

It is critical to be a savvy consumer and aware of tricks criminals use to steal from you. The Attorney General offers 45-minute seminars on: Identity Theft; Phone, Mail & e-Scams; Online Safety; Investment Fraud; Home Repair and Improvement; and In-Home Care & Senior Residences. ...

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-427720--,00.html

August 30, 2017

Schuette: Department of Attorney General Won't Tolerate Gouging, Price Fixing at the Pump in the Wake of Hurricane Harvey

LANSING – As a result of Hurricane Harvey, the nation’s largest oil refinery, in addition to many smaller refineries, have been shut down and it is possible Michigan drivers may see a slight spike in gas prices. In light of this, Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today issued a warning to gas stations against any attempt to take advantage of consumers by price gouging or price fixing.

This outage has potential to have affects outside the states affected by the storm and Schuette made it clear to gas station owners that taking advantage of this type of disaster would not be tolerated.

“Labor Day weekend is days away and that means an uptick in cars traveling roads. Combined with the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey means Michigan families may see an increase in prices at the pump,” said Schuette. “However, these circumstances do not constitute a free pass for gas stations to gouge...”

- **Original Press Release:** http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-431018--,00.html

NEW JERSEY

August 11, 2017

Attorney General Porrino and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Urge Seniors to Beware of Phone Fraud Schemes, Provide Materials to Help Spot Scams

NEWARK – Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino and the Division of Consumer Affairs are urging seniors to avoid becoming the victims of phone fraud schemes and are providing a number of educational tools to help with the effort.

The Division offers brochures online to help consumers identify scams and avoid them. Its latest brochure, Fighting Phone Fraud, also gives information on the federal Do Not Call Registry and how to sign up, along with ways to block robocallers.

The message of the brochures is simple: If you think the call you are receiving is a scam, it probably is.

“Technology has made it easier for disreputable companies and criminals to prey on senior citizens with a simple phone call, often bullying or cajoling people to part with their money. These types of scams are despicable,” said Attorney General Porrino. “We want to arm seniors with information to help them avoid becoming victims and...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170811b.html>

August 25, 2017

Proposed Regulation

NEWARK – The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs has proposed amendments to regulations regarding health care service firms.

The proposal effectuates P.L. 2014, c. 29. This law establishes that companion services, which are non-medical, basic supervision and socialization services, may be offered by health care service firms only. The law also requires that health care service firms obtain accreditation from accrediting bodies recognized by the Department of Human Services and that health care service firms submit audits to the Division of Consumer Affairs every three years.

The proposed regulation, and information on how to submit a comment by October 20, 2017, can be viewed here. . . .

➤ **Original Press Release:** http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases17/pr20170825_pr-2.html

NEW MEXICO

August 10, 2017

REFUND ALERT: 192 New Mexicans Need to Cash Settlement Checks from the National Mortgage Settlement

Albuquerque, NM – This morning, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced that 192 New Mexico homeowners still need to cash their National Mortgage Settlement (NMS) checks, and that a letter was sent to them on July 28, 2017 from Rust Consulting, Inc. instructing them how to request a new check if they did not previously receive one. Checks must be cashed, or a new

check must be requested, before August 25, 2017 or the funds will be transferred to the State of New Mexico.

“It’s important that New Mexico homeowners receive the money they are entitled to from the National Mortgage Settlement before those funds are transferred to the state as unclaimed property,” said Attorney General Balderas. “If you believe you should have received a check, please contact Rust Consulting, Inc. immediately in order to avoid forfeiting your settlement funds.”

In February 2012, 49 state attorneys general, the District of Columbia and the...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/192_New_Mexicans_Need_to_Cash_Settlement_Checks_from_the_National_Mortgage_Settlement.pdf

August 11, 2017

SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans about Mortgage Modification Scam

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert regarding a new mortgage modification scam that seeks to steal money from struggling New Mexico homeowners. The callers claim to be with Nationstar and ask for money to be sent to an attorney in Florida promising a loan modification on the victim’s mortgage. The calls come from Ymax or Magic Jack phone numbers and can appear to come from any area code. The scammers are asking New Mexicans to wire money upwards of \$1200, money that they may never get back.

“Calls and offers like these are scams and New Mexico homeowners need to be vigilant, because once you wire that money you may never get it back,” said Attorney General Balderas. “If you are struggling to make your mortgage payments, there is legitimate help available to you from our Keep Your Home New Mexico program. Please contact our...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/AG_Balderas_Warns_New_Mexicans_about_Mortgage_Modification_Scam.pdf

August 21, 2017

SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Warns New Mexicans about Fraudulent “Make-A-Wish” Sweepstakes Scam

Albuquerque, NM – Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert regarding callers posing as officers of a “Consumer Protection Agency,” who have been telling New Mexicans they’ve won hundreds of thousands of dollars in a sweepstakes allegedly conducted by the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The supposed winners are told they must first pay money to cover taxes, insurance and/or courier fees in order to claim their “prize.” The scammers are asking New Mexicans to send or wire upwards of \$3,500 in order to claim their fictitious “prize.”

“It doesn’t get any lower than trying to steal from New Mexicans by fraudulently invoking a

charity that serves innocent children fighting for their lives,” said Attorney General Balderas. “Do not be fooled by this scam, and never, ever send money to claim a ‘prize.’ I’m urging New Mexico families to be on guard for this scam and to contact our office immediately if they...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

http://www.nmag.gov/uploads/PressRelease/48737699ae174b30ac51a7eb286e661f/SCAM_ALERT_AG_Balderas_Warns_New_Mexicans_about_Fraudulent_Make_A_Wish_Sweepstakes_Scam.pdf

NEW YORK

August 16, 2017

A.G. Schneiderman Issues Consumer Warning In Advance Of Flood Relief Construction

ALBANY—Following the State’s announcement that New York will dedicate up to \$15 million in state funding to help homeowners impacted by flooding along Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River, Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today issued a consumer alert warning homeowners to be cautious when entering into agreements with contractors.

“The good news is that New Yorkers impacted by flooding will see much-needed relief,” said Attorney General Schneiderman. “However, scammers often follow the money. Be careful to protect yourself from predatory or fraudulent businesses seeking to profit from storm damage. This includes contractors who may represent themselves as experts in areas in which they have little or no experience. My office will continue to hold contractors accountable and, together, we can ensure that New Yorkers get the home repairs they need, without getting ripped off in the process.”

Under the terms of the State’s program, homeowners may qualify for up to...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://ag.ny.gov/press-release/ag-schneiderman-issues-consumer-warning-advance-flood-relief-construction>

OHIO

August 15, 2017

Attorney General DeWine Offers Consumers Tips for Purchasing Solar Eclipse Glasses

(COLUMBUS, Ohio) — Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today offered consumer protection tips ahead of the August 21 solar eclipse.

“Ohioans of all ages are intrigued by the upcoming solar eclipse, but safety needs to be a priority to avoid permanent eye damage,” said Attorney General DeWine. “We want consumers to be informed before buying solar eclipse glasses.”

The American Astronomical Society (AAS) warns that it has received reports of fake solar eclipse glasses being sold. These glasses do not properly filter the sun’s rays, and, in turn, may damage

a person's eyes. Previously, glasses with the seal of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) were considered safe. While all acceptable glasses are ISO certified, there is a chance that counterfeit glasses may also claim to be ISO certified.

Tips for consumers include:

Visit aas.org to find a reputable dealer. The AAS has a list available of all merchants and vendors that...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2017/Attorney-General-DeWine-Offers-Consumers-Tips-for>

OKLAHOMA

August 09, 2017

AG Hunter Announces Emergency Price Stabilization Act in Effect in Four Northeastern Counties

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter is reminding Oklahomans in Mayes, Rogers, Tulsa and Wagoner counties the Emergency Price Stabilization Act is in effect after the state of emergency declared earlier today.

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

Attorney General Hunter said the statute protects Oklahomans during a vulnerable time and he urges individuals who have sustained damage to homes or businesses to be aware of criminals in the community targeting damaged property.

“Oklahomans recovering from the weekend storms need to remain attentive of companies that have come into the community to offer services,” Attorney General Hunter said. ...

- **Original Press Release:** https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=34683

August 30, 2017

Attorney General Hunter Announces Emergency Price Stabilization Act in Effect Statewide

OKLAHOMA CITY – Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter is reminding Oklahomans the Emergency Price Stabilization Act is in effect for all 77 counties after the disaster emergency declaration announced yesterday.

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

The order was called due to Hurricane Harvey, which continues to impact parts of the south. Attorney General Hunter said in this case, the statute will protect Oklahomans looking to help

those who have been devastated and ensure fair prices for those who have been displaced because of the storm.

“Our Gulf Coast neighbors need our help right now,” Attorney General Hunter said. “This statute will send a clear message to those who are trying to take advantage of others that they...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=35380

OREGON

August 14, 2017

Don't Be Blinded by an Eclipse Glasses

"Next Monday millions of Americans of all ages, including tens of thousands of Oregonians, will don special eyeglasses to watch the eclipse.

They will do so in the belief these special eyeglasses will protect them from harmful rays of the sun.

I want everyone who witnesses this amazing celestial event to be safe.

So, please, listen up – in order to protect your own eyes and those of your family and fellow Oregonians.

The key to watching the eclipse safely is getting solar glasses that will protect your eyes' retinas. Sadly, con artists are at it again, resulting in UNSAFE solar glasses and handheld solar viewers being purchased by eclipse watchers.

Just the other day Amazon issued refunds to some of its customers, saying they could not verify that certain of the solar eclipse glasses it had sold came from a recommended manufacturer, even though they were stamped with the correct ISO number.

Consumers need to be..."

➤ **Original Press Release:** https://www.doj.state.or.us/media-home/news-media-releases/dont-blinded-eclipse-glasses-scam/?sf_paged=2

PENNSYLVANIA

August 18, 2017

Attorney General Shapiro Warns: Don't Get Blinded By Solar Eclipse Glasses Scams

HARRISBURG — Attorney General Josh Shapiro is alerting Pennsylvania consumers to be on the lookout for fake solar eclipse glasses that promise to keep consumers' eyes safe Monday while watching the Solar Eclipse – but which don't have the required level of protection.

On Monday, millions of Americans and Pennsylvanians will watch the Solar Eclipse. NASA is

recommending anyone viewing the eclipse should use solar viewing glasses because of the powerful energy the sun expels. Legitimate solar eclipse glasses have special-purpose filters to protect your eyes, while fake glasses do not.

“We’re warning Pennsylvania consumers: Don’t get blinded by fake solar eclipse glasses,” Attorney General Shapiro said. “Do some checking to make sure the glasses you buy will thoroughly protect your eyes and allow you to safely view the Solar Eclipse.”

While Pennsylvanians will not be able to see the full eclipse, we will see the moon covering about 75 to 80...

➤ **Original Press Release:**

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=3874

TEXAS

August 25, 2017

AG Paxton Announces Consumer Protection Hotline

Attorney General Ken Paxton today announced that, in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, employees from the Consumer Protection Division and the Constituent Affairs Division will operate the Consumer Protection Hotline throughout this weekend. If Texans in affected counties believe they have been scammed or encountered price gouging during or after Hurricane Harvey, they should call the Office of the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Hotline toll-free at (800) 621-0508 or email consumeremergency@oag.texas.gov.

“During declared disasters, state law prohibits businesses from charging exorbitant prices for necessities such as gas, food, drinking water, clothing and lodging,” Attorney General Paxton said. “Texans affected by Hurricane Harvey should take steps to protect themselves and report any alleged price gouging or scam contractors to the Office of the Attorney General.” ...

➤ **Original Press Release:** <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-announces-consumer-protection-hotline>

August 25, 2017

AG Paxton Comments on Hurricane Harvey

In anticipation of Hurricane Harvey making landfall, Attorney General Ken Paxton today said Texans must be vigilant to heed any and all directions from local and state law enforcement officials as they prepare to guide people along the Gulf Coast to safety.

Governor Greg Abbott preemptively declared a state of emergency for 30 Texas counties, which are listed at <http://bit.ly/2wCDTbP>.

“Anytime catastrophic storms hit Texas, we witness the courage of our first responders and the generosity of neighbors coming together to help their fellow Texans,” Attorney General Paxton said. “Unfortunately, in the wake of the damage from storms and flooding, we also see bad actors taking advantage of victims and their circumstances. To that end, I’d like to caution

everyone in any area that may be affected by Harvey to be extremely cautious with people who may offer to help residents with rebuilding or repairs.”

Texans in areas affected by Hurricane Harvey...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-comments-on-hurricane-harvey>

August 31, 2017

AG Paxton Warns Gas Stations Against Fraud in Wake of Hurricane Harvey

Attorney General Ken Paxton issued a warning to gas stations against any attempt to take advantage of Texas consumers by fraudulent action in the wake of Hurricane Harvey. The Consumer Protection Division of the attorney general’s office received more than 500 complaints today, many of which involve allegations of high fuel prices in Dallas, including amounts ranging from \$6-\$8 dollars per gallon.

“Texas law protects consumers from fraud in Dallas and other parts of Texas outside of the governor’s declared disaster areas,” said Marc Rylander, communications director for the attorney general’s office. “If Dallas consumers are victims of fraud by gas stations, we urge them to contact our agency’s consumer protection hotline so that we can investigate and take appropriate action.”

Victims of fraud can report it immediately by calling the attorney general’s Consumer Protection Hotline at 1-800-621-0508, emailing consumeremergency@oag.texas.gov, or filing a complaint online at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov. Consumers are encouraged to submit...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-warns-gas-stations-against-fraud-in-wake-of-hurricane-harvey>

August 31, 2017

AG Paxton Releases Statement on Harvey Insurance Claims and HB 1774

In light of so much misinformation circulating in social media, Attorney General Ken Paxton today issued the following statement about property insurance claims in areas affected by Hurricane Harvey:

“There has been much misinformation, some of it apparently deliberate, about the impact of HB 1774 on property insurance claims, which takes effect on this Friday, September 1, 2017. First, please know that the bill does not apply to the federal flood insurance program, nor does it apply to homeowner policies issued by the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association. For all other property insurance policies, the legislation does not change the claim filing process or the time lines for filing claims. Texas policyholders will continue to have strong remedies against insurance companies, whether claims are filed before September 1 or after September 1. For more information, please click onto this link or consult the website of the Texas Department of Insurance.” ...

- **Original Press Release:** <https://texasattorneygeneral.gov/news/releases/ag-paxton-releases-statement-on-harvey-insurance-claims-and-hb-1774>

VIRGINIA

August 23, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING WARNS VIRGINIA CONSUMERS OF PUREBRED PUPPY SCAM

RICHMOND (August 23, 2017) - Today, Attorney General Mark R. Herring is warning Virginia consumers about an active fraud involving purebred puppies. When looking for a purebred puppy to add to their family, many consumers start their search on the internet, and that is exactly what scammers are relying on. Attorney General Herring's Consumer Protection Section has recently received multiple reports of consumers entering into agreements to buy a pet with a company they found online, only to learn the website and the company are a scam - and that no such puppy ever existed.

"Finding a new puppy to add to your family is an exciting time for Virginians, and the last thing anyone would want to happen is to pay hundreds of dollars to bring that puppy home, only to find out that he or she never existed," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "Unfortunately, we've seen an increase...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1016-august-23-2017-ag-herring-warns-virginia-consumers-of-purebred-puppy-scam>

VIRGINIA

August 28, 2017

ATTORNEY GENERAL HERRING'S "VIRGINIA MILITARY AND VETERAN LEGAL RESOURCE GUIDE" NOW AVAILABLE AT ALL VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES OFFICES

RICHMOND (August 28, 2017) - Attorney General Mark R. Herring's newly launched Virginia Military and Veteran Legal Resource Guide is now available at all Department of Veterans Services offices across the Commonwealth. The guide is a new tool to help Virginia servicemembers, military families, and veterans utilize the unique legal protections, rights, and resources available to them under the law. Volunteer attorneys from the Office of Attorney General spent more than a year developing the new guide, which is available at www.VaMilGuide.com.

"The Virginia Military and Veteran Legal Resource guide helps servicemembers, military families, and veterans understand the many unique rights and protections afforded to them by state and federal law, and connects them with resources that can assist them when they have legal needs," said Attorney General Mark Herring. "The Department of Veterans Services provides invaluable support to our veterans across the Commonwealth, and I'm glad our guides...

- **Original Press Release:** <http://www.oag.state.va.us/media-center/news-releases/1019-august-28-2017-ag-herring-s-virginia-military-and-veteran-legal-resource-guide-now-available-at-all-virginia-department-of-veterans-services-offices>

West Virginia

August 31, 2017

Attorney General Morrisey Warns Consumers to Be Cautious of Fake Email Alerts

CHARLESTON — West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey warns consumers to be cautious of fake email alerts, especially as the frequency of online purchases increase during the fall and holiday shopping seasons.

Scammers often impersonate popular retailers with emails that attempt to steal personal information. Such reports are routinely brought to the attention of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, including as recently as this month.

These spoof emails may arrive in the form of an order confirmation, shipment status report or advertisement of an upcoming sale. The emails may also replicate the retailer's logo and allude to its website, however in most every case clicking on an included link or attachment opens the consumer to fraud.

"Consumers must pay close attention to the emails they receive," Attorney General Morrisey said. "We all like getting good deals and saving extra money, however consumers must exercise caution so a scammer doesn't take advantage of..."

➤ **Original Press Release:** <http://us7.campaign-archive2.com/?u=dffe711cd807d3fba5777bbf0&id=65860e7132>