NATIONAL STATE ATTORNEYS
GENERAL PROGRAM:
CONSUMER PROTECTION
REPORT

December 2015 – January 2016
CONSUMER PROTECTION REPORT:  
December 1, 2015 – January 31, 2016

This newsletter is a monthly circulation that describes consumer protection activity announced by state attorneys general. This information was gathered solely from attorney general press releases. It makes no effort to prioritize or analyze the impact of any of these cases and initiatives.

The following press releases are organized by state and multistate activity. In addition, certain Medicaid fraud cases that touch on consumer protection and advocacy initiatives have been included.

If an office would like their activity to be included in subsequent newsletters, please notify attorneygeneral@law.columbia.edu.

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The National State Attorneys General Program at Columbia Law School is a legal research, education, and policy center that examines the implications of the jurisprudence of state attorneys general. Working closely with attorneys general, academics, and other members of the legal community, the program is active in the development and dissemination of legal information used by state prosecutors in carrying out their civil and criminal responsibilities.

For more information about the National State Attorneys General Program and resources, please visit our website www.stateag.org.
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CONSUMER PROTECTION CASES, SETTLEMENTS AND ADVOCACY STATEMENTS

ARIZONA
January 19, 2016

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Files Lawsuit Against Tucson Business Accused of Scamming Musicians

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced his office filed a Consumer Fraud Lawsuit against Sticks N Strings, Inc., a musical instrument shop in Tucson. The complaint alleges Sticks N Strings and its owner, Anthony Bernard, accepted thousands of dollars’ worth of payments for musical instruments and failed to deliver those instruments to consumers.

The Attorney General’s Office received seven consumer complaints against Sticks N Strings. According to the Consumer Fraud Lawsuit, one consumer paid Sticks N Strings over $20,000.00 for several guitars and has not received any of the guitars ordered. The same consumer has not received a refund either. The complaint also alleges Bernard falsely claimed to have issued refunds to consumers. All seven consumers who filed complaints with the Attorney General’s Office have not received a refund.


January 15, 2016

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Announces Undercover Sting Results in Judgment Against Auto Repair Shop

Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced a $50,000 judgment against an Arizona auto repair shop caught on hidden camera defrauding customers during an undercover AG sting operation. GBY Transmissions, a transmission repair shop owned by Gerardo Figueroa Haros and managed by Gerardo Figueroa Salinas admitted to charging customers for auto repairs they didn’t need.
ARIZONA CONT’D

Special Agents with the Attorney General’s Office conducted the sting operation. An automotive repair expert disconnected the vehicle’s transaxle/harness connector, which could easily be reconnected at a minimal cost of approximately $40 to $100. Instead of making the appropriate repairs, Defendants claimed that the undercover vehicle needed a complete transmission rebuild. Defendants charged the State $1,010.69 for installing unnecessary parts, for making unnecessary repairs to the vehicle, and for parts never replaced.


January 7, 2016

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Protects Gun Owners from Fraudulent Retailer

While President Obama opines that it is too easy for people to buy guns, that was certainly not the case at Black Weapons Armory in Tucson. Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced today his office filed a Consumer Fraud Lawsuit against the Arizona firearms retailer accused of scamming gun owners out of thousands of dollars. The complaint alleges Black Weapons Armory and its owner John Thomas Rompel Jr. took payments for firearms and failed to deliver those firearms to consumers.


December 21, 2015

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Sues Magazine Subscription Telemarketing Business

Attorney General Mark Brnovich filed a consumer fraud lawsuit against an Arizona telemarketing company accused of using a magazine subscription scam to defraud consumers throughout the United States. Burudi Mwonyonyi and his company, Publishers Service Office, Inc. are alleged to have placed 48,000 telephone calls a month, using an auto-dialer, to sell consumers new
ARIZONA CONT’D

or renewed magazine subscriptions. Publishers Service Office is alleged to have violated the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act by falsely claiming that Publishers Service Office was authorized by magazine publishers to charge or bill the consumers on behalf of the publisher.


December 7, 2015

Attorney General Brnovich Announces Used Car Dealership Banned From Selling Cars

Attorney General Mark Brnovich today announced Uncle Joe’s Auto Sales is banned from selling cars in Arizona after violating the state’s Consumer Fraud Act. The used car dealership and its owners will also pay $70,000 in consumer restitution. The restitution is part of a Consent Judgment reached against Front Line Auto Auction, LLC, doing business as Uncle Joe’s Auto Sales and Uncle Joe’s Auto Consignment Shop (“Uncle Joe’s”) and its principals, Joseph and Gina Colombo. The Consent Judgment also bans Uncle Joe’s and the Colombo’s from owning, operating, or managing a motor vehicle sales or finance business in Arizona.


ARKANSAS

January 12, 2016

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Files Suit against Local Car Dealer for Consumer-Protection Violation

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge filed a consumer-protection lawsuit today against Jacksonville-based Miracle Motors Corp. and its owners for advertising the sale of used vehicles and failing to provide the vehicle title on the vehicle to Arkansas purchasers.

Arkansas Cont’d

January 7, 2016

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Files Suit Against Arkansas Funeral Care

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge filed a consumer-protection lawsuit today against Jacksonville-based Arkansas Funeral Care (AFC) because the business did not provide various funeral-care services in a timely, professional and respectful manner, and in some cases did not provide the expected service at all.

The complaint states that Arkansans entered into written contracts for chosen funeral goods and services with AFC based on advertised representations on their website, as well as other oral representations made during the sales process. The contracts detailed the costs of the funeral goods and services to be rendered at the time of need.


December 30, 2015

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Reaches Settlement with Texarkana Pawn Shop

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge and Tri-State Pawn of Texarkana Inc. have reached a settlement to resolve allegations that consumers were charged excessive interest rates on title loans, a violation of Arkansas law.

The consent judgment, which was filed in Pulaski County Circuit Court, prohibits Tri-State Pawn from charging or collecting from consumers on auto pawns or title loans and all outstanding auto pawns or title loans entered into by the pawn shop with Arkansans are voided. $8,697 will be paid to the Attorney General’s office to be distributed to those consumers affected by the pawn shop’s unlawful actions. Tri-State will also pay $108,000 to the Attorney General’s office to be deposited into the Consumer Education and Enforcement Fund.

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Announces Settlement with Mondelēz International, Inc. for Lack of Prop 65 Warning of Excess Lead in Cookies

Today, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, in conjunction with eleven California District Attorneys and the nonprofit Center for Environmental Health, announced a landmark settlement with food industry giant Mondelēz International, Inc., formerly Kraft Foods, for selling ginger snap cookies containing lead in excess of California limits without the warning required by California’s Proposition 65. A consent judgment was filed Thursday in Orange County Superior Court and is awaiting approval by a judge.

Under the settlement, Mondelēz will agree to strict product sourcing and testing protocols that limit lead in its Nabisco Ginger Snap cookies to no more than 30 parts per billion per serving and will pay approximately $750,000 in civil penalties, costs and attorneys’ fees. Additionally, the company will hire a food quality auditor to train personnel, will fund ongoing independent auditing of its products to monitor for lead, and will monitor supply chains to ensure raw materials are within acceptable limits.

https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-kamala-d-harris-announces-settlement-mondel%C4%93z-international-inc

December 1, 2015

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Files Lawsuits Against Two Car Donation Charities for Misrepresenting Charitable Programs and Misdirecting Donations

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, along with two local District Attorneys, today filed civil lawsuits against two car donation charities for violating state law by misrepresenting their charitable programs and improperly profiting from ostensibly charitable activities.

In partnership with the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office, Attorney General Harris filed suit against People’s Choice Charities; and in partnership with the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office, the Attorney General filed suit against Cars 4 Causes.
Car donation organizations are 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations that solicit car donations (often through extensive advertising), sell the vehicles, deduct all their costs, and then use what is left to fund a charitable program, which they choose or allow the donor to choose.


COLORADO
January 7, 2016

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Continues Crackdown on Unscrupulous Debt Collectors


Collect Pros, a Nevada corporation, was collecting from Colorado consumers on alleged debt from magazine subscriptions and a variety of health and wellness products. Through OCP, various states and regulatory agencies were able to share information resulting in actions across the nation against Collect Pros. Research identified 3,300 consumer collection accounts in Colorado. Collect Pros’ collection agency was subsequently denied license based on violations of the Colorado Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, including not providing required disclosures and information to consumers, and not providing valid verification of the debt.

COLORADO CONT'D

December 10, 2015

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Releases $2.2 Million to More than 5,700 Coloradans Victimized by Lending Abuses

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman is announcing that through the settlement of several cases, nearly 5,700 Colorado consumers will be receiving refunds totaling approximately $2.2 million. The majority of the settlements resolved issues with companies that were providing debt settlement services that violated the Uniform Debt Management Services Act.

The largest of the recent settlements against the debt settlement companies was with California-based debt settlement provider, Freedom Debt Relief. Pursuant to a Consent Judgment, Freedom Debt Relief agreed to revise the agreements and disclosures it uses with Colorado consumers and pay consumer refunds. The other debt settlement companies paying refunds include, Century Negotiations Inc., Orion Financial Group and Prestige Financial Solutions, Inc.


DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

January 14, 2016

Attorney General Karl A. Racine Announces District Receives Several Favorable Rulings in Litigation to Help Tenants of Park Southern Apartment Building

Rulings Should Benefit Tenants by Paving Way for Sale of Building and Much-Needed Repairs

A D.C. Superior Court judge has issued a series of recent rulings in favor of the District in a lawsuit against the nonprofit owner of the Park Southern Apartments, Attorney General Karl A. Racine announced today. The rulings come in litigation against the Park Southern Neighborhood Corporation (PSNC) alleging serious mismanagement of the building, which offers affordable housing to low-income residents at 800 Southern Avenue SE.
The recent rulings may pave the way for sale of the building, providing the resources required to remedy significant problems stemming from mismanagement.

The litigation began in 2014, when the District intervened in a case brought by the Park Southern Residents’ Council. The Council had sued PSNC, the nonprofit corporation that owns the 360-unit building. The District’s lawsuit cites multiple examples of mismanagement by PSNC and its president, Rowena Scott, including falling far behind on mortgage and utility bill payments and allowing the building to fall into severe disrepair. The suit cites a litany of serious problems stemming from the mismanagement.


January 9, 2016

Attorney General Karl A. Racine Files Lawsuit against Owners of Buildings in Congress Heights for Violations of Housing Laws

Attorney General Karl A. Racine today announced that the District has filed a complaint against the owners of a rent-controlled apartment complex in Congress Heights for multiple violations of the District’s housing laws. The buildings are slated to become a future mixed-use development.

The complaint alleges that Sanford Capital and related businesses, the owners of four properties adjacent to the Congress Heights Metro station at Alabama Avenue and 13th Street SE, have allowed the proliferation of unsafe and unsanitary conditions by failing to perform basic maintenance on the buildings. The suit outlines a “pattern of neglect” over long periods of time, leading to persistent problems with inoperable and missing smoke detectors, inoperable fire extinguishers, bedbugs, rodent infestations, unstable ceilings, lack of heat and hot water, and other issues. The owners of the building, the complaint alleges, have repeatedly declined to rectify the problems, either by wholly ignoring the repeated complaints or by performing only limited, superficial fixes.

Attorney General Bondi Shuts Down Another Travel Scam

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Office has shut down another travel scam, obtaining temporary injunctions against several related travel companies and owners. This is the latest action taken to stop a total of six Florida travel companies accused of deceiving consumers. Last month, Attorney General Bondi’s Office filed actions against three companies seeking similar relief.

According to the most recent complaint filed by Attorney General Bondi’s Office, Reservation Services International knowingly allowed its two distributors, Map Destinations, LLC and Florida Beaches Destinations Club, LLC, which operated as Suite Journeys and Diamond Vacations International, to employ unscrupulous sales tactics to induce consumers into purchasing its vacation club memberships.

The complaint alleges that the travel companies lured potential customers into attending lengthy sales presentations with promises of free gifts or cruises that were laden with restrictive terms or not actually free. The companies also allegedly exaggerated the true savings, nature and value of the club memberships. Some consumers paid several thousands of dollars for these travel club memberships that the companies claimed offered deeply discounted wholesale pricing on hotels, condominiums, cruises, rental cars and vacation packages. Once purchased, consumers reported that they could obtain the same or better pricing on other free publicly available travel booking websites.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/F347655F4D55789985257F3B0077DD8B

Attorney General Bondi Shuts Down Loan Scheme

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Office obtained a temporary injunction shutting down a loan scheme that allegedly charged consumers fees anywhere from $500 to more than $1,000 for loan referral services. According to the complaint filed by the Attorney General’s Office, most of the consumers were strapped for cash and could easily perform the services on their own for free.
The complaint alleges violations of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act against three loan service companies and three individuals. In marketing and sales pitches, the defendants allegedly made numerous false statements and deceptive representations to consumers in need of loans. According to the complaint, the defendants misled consumers to believe that the loans are guaranteed, the upfront fees are merely processing fees, and if the defendants did not obtain loans for the consumers, the defendants will refund any fees charged. The complaint also asserts that the defendants used bank information provided by consumers to withdraw funds from consumers’ bank accounts without consumers’ authorization.

The Florida Attorney General’s Office has more than 200 complaints alleging the defendants engaged in unfair and deceptive business practices. As a result of the Attorney General’s action, the defendants’ bank accounts and other assets are frozen. The defendants are also prohibited from engaging in the false and deceptive practices alleged in the complaint and causing further harm to consumers. The civil complaint remains pending with the court and seeks full refunds for all affected consumers.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/A06EE92C33C9E95585257F3A0068BB92

January 12, 2016

**Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Settlement in Investigation Launched After OAG Employee Receives Mailing**

A so-called free DVD sent to an employee of the Florida Attorney General’s Office launched an investigation that will change the way a nationwide company markets its products. Attorney General Pam Bondi today announced her office has entered into an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance with TN Marketing, Inc., to stop the company from mailing unordered products to Florida consumers and then asking consumers to pay for them, and to address other allegations of unfair and deceptive trade practices.

The Attorney General’s Office began investigating TN Marketing after an employee received an unsolicited DVD from the company with a letter claiming the disc was a free gift; however, the letter also asked our employee
FLORIDA CONT’D

to return the National Sewing Circle DVD or pay $12.95. The employee received three additional letters requesting return of the DVD or payment.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/52247813C8CF2F1B85257F38006BA777

January 11, 2016

Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Consent Judgment Obtained Against Credit Counseling and Debt Management Service Companies

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Office today announced the filing of a stipulated consent judgment against Bobby R. Blackmon, Financial Help Services, Inc. and Nation Wide Consumer Debt Relief, Inc., based on unfair and deceptive business practices. Both companies, with Blackmon as principal, provided credit counseling and debt management services to consumers in 48 states. According to consumer complaints, the defendants withdrew customers’ funds to pay creditors on a monthly basis, but did not pay the creditors within 30 days as required by law, and in some cases, never paid the creditors at all.

The consent judgment bans the defendants from engaging in or assisting others in any consumer debt-related services. The judgment also requires a payment of at least a million dollars, including full consumer restitution of more than $600,000, before the remainder of the $7 million judgment can be suspended. The monetary judgment will be reinstated if the defendants violate any material term of the judgment.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/245AAD4BC49104E385257F37006EE6C8

January 8, 2016

Attorney General Bondi and FTC Sue Payment Processing Operation for Credit Card Laundering and Interest Rate Scam

Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Federal Trade Commission today announced that they have sued CardReady, LLC, a payment processing sales
organization, and its three executives and three telemarketing company owners for allegedly laundering credit card transactions as part of a nationwide telemarketing scam based in Pinellas County.

Attorney General Bondi and the FTC allege that CardReady facilitated the processing of nearly $20 million in illegal upfront fees collected from consumers being defrauded by a telemarketing scam that promised to reduce their credit card interest rates. CardReady and its executives allegedly created more than two dozen fake businesses to act as fronts and to launder the illegal fees. Not only did consumers suffer great financial loss in this scam, but CardReady’s alleged credit card laundering activities helped the scammers evade detection from law enforcement and payment networks such as Visa and Mastercard.

The phony businesses created to further this alleged scam include Address My Savings; Applied Budgeting; Budgeting Insights; Competitive Budgeting; Complete Budgeting; Conserved Budgeting; Consigned Savings; Containing Expenses; Datalink Financial; Decisive Budgeting; Efficient Budgeting; Insightful Budgeting; Intuitive Budgeting; Less Costly Living; Living Competitively; Lowered Expenses; Prepared Budgeting; Reduced Expenses; Resourceful Budgeting; Sensible Budgeting; Skilled Budgeting; The Next Financial; Total Budgeting; Today’s Financial Living; Your Household Budget; Your New Budget; and Your Next Financial Step.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/0758FFF77DDC2B2985257F34005203DC

December 22, 2016

**Attorney General Bondi and Commissioner Putnam Shut Down Travel Scams**

Attorney General Pam Bondi and Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam today announced coordinated actions taken to stop Florida travel companies accused of deceiving consumers. According to consumer complaints, the defendants charged for items advertised as free; sold vacation packages that could not be used because of burdensome blackout dates and overly restrictive terms and conditions; refused to provide refunds or allow cancelation of purchases; greatly exaggerated savings; and made unauthorized charges to consumer credit cards.
December 16, 2015

**Attorney General Bondi Shuts Down AC Service Scheme**

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Office today obtained a temporary injunction to shut down an air conditioning service scheme targeting vulnerable Floridians. According to the complaint, 11 companies and individuals named as defendants used false claims, intimidation and scare tactics to coerce hundreds of consumers, many of them seniors, into purchasing expensive air conditioning parts and services that were not needed or rendered. The scheme cost consumers millions of dollars.

The defendants allegedly used bait and switch tactics, enticing consumers with offers of massively discounted air conditioning services but then convincing the consumers to sign up for much higher priced services instead. According to the complaint, the defendants used weekly mailers and online ads to advertise air duct cleaning services, often for less than $20. Air duct cleaning services typically cost between $450 and $1,000. Once consumers signed up for these services, a representative of the companies visited the consumer’s home and attempted to sell other, more expensive services.

The complaint alleges that on many occasions, company representatives falsely told consumers that air ducts and vents in their homes contained dangerous mold, even though the company representatives had not conducted proper testing to make their mold assessment, and frequently did not hold the appropriate professional licenses required by the State of Florida to provide mold-related services. One disabled consumer reported paying the defendants more than $1,500 to remove mold from her system, but later discovered the services were not provided.
IDAHO
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden Resolves Consumer Case with Boise Telemarketing Company

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has resolved a consumer protection case with a Boise telemarketer.

The settlement was reached with Vurv, LLC, and its fulfillment partner, Drug Testing Compliance Group LLC. The two companies operated nationwide as DTC Group, Wasden said.

The settlement approved this week by 4th District Judge Jonathan Medema, requires the company to provide refunds to eligible consumers.

Wasden alleged that the telemarketer made unsolicited calls selling drug testing and other compliance services to newly-registered commercial drivers between June 2013 and December 2015. DTC Group has denied any wrongdoing.


January 8, 2016

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden Reaches Settlement with Makers of 5-hour Energy Products

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has reached a settlement with the companies that manufacture and market 5-hour Energy products.

The settlement, approved by District Judge Richard Greenwood this week, resolves a lawsuit filed by Wasden alleging Living Essentials, LLC, and Innovation Ventures, LLC, misrepresented their energy shot products, including whether consumers experience a “crash” after consumption and claims the products are recommended by doctors. Living Essentials and Innovation Ventures deny any violations of Idaho law.

Under terms of the agreement, the companies will not represent that 5-hour Energy products have sponsorships, benefits or ingredients they don’t have.

ILLINOIS
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Lisa Madigan Sues Fraudulent Charitable Telemarketers Again

Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced a three-count complaint against professional fundraiser (PFR) and for-profit telemarketer Safety Publications, Inc., of Elk Grove Village, Ill., and its owners, Adam Herdman and Arthur Olivera, alleging violations of the charitable Solicitation Act and prior consent decrees with Madigan’s office. The Solicitation Act sets forth the laws governing charitable solicitation and fundraising activities by PFRs in Illinois.

The three counts in Madigan’s lawsuit include: 1) misleading the donating public as to who was making the solicitation and how the donations would be used; 2) acting on behalf of a charity without maintaining the required registration and failing to disclose or account for fundraising activities; and 3) violating the consent decrees Safety Publications and its owners had previously entered into with Madigan’s office.

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2016_01/20160128.html

January 27, 2016

Attorney General Lisa Madigan Announces Former Chicago Area Charity Exec Sentenced

Former Head of Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation Must Repay $44,000 in Funds Used for Personal Use, Casino Trips

Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a Chicago area woman and former executive director of the Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation was sentenced for using thousands of dollars of the charity’s funds for personal use.

Charlene McMann, 65, of West Chicago, was sentenced earlier today by DuPage County Judge Liam Brennan after pleading guilty on Dec. 1, 2015, to personal use of charitable assets, a Class 2 felony. McMann was ordered to pay $44,085 to the Chicago-based Cancer Research Foundation, which shares a similar mission as the now-defunct Chicago Blood Cancer Foundation. McMann also received two years of probation.
January 20, 2016

**Attorney General Lisa Madigan Sues Owner Of Franklin County Home Repair Business**

Attorney General Lisa Madigan announced a lawsuit against the owner of a Franklin County home repair business for cheating southern Illinois residents out of more than $127,000 for work that was either substandard or never performed.

Attorney General Madigan filed the lawsuit in the Circuit Court for the 2nd Judicial Circuit in Franklin County against Robert Hartley of Buckner, doing business as Hartley and French Roofing and Hartley’s Contracting. The lawsuit accuses Hartley of violating the state’s Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act and the Home Repair and Remodeling Act.

According to Madigan’s lawsuit, Hartley solicited residents by going door-to-door offering roofing and other repair services. Madigan is alleging that Hartley cheated consumers by performing work that was shoddy or incomplete. The lawsuit also states Hartley did not have the mandatory roofing license required by the state.

December 7, 2015

**Attorney General Lisa Madigan Sues Chicago Area Company For Mortgage Rescue Scheme**

*Company’s Owner Promised Mortgage Help Then Defrauded Consumers of more than $26,000*

Attorney General Lisa Madigan filed suit against a Cicero company and its owner for a mortgage rescue and consumer fraud scheme that illegally charged consumers approximately $20,000 in upfront fees that resulted in little, if any, help to stay in their homes.
The Attorney General filed suit in Cook County Circuit Court against Carrey Services, Inc. and its president Reynaldo Rojas. The lawsuit seeks to shut down the business and obtain restitution for consumers.


INDIANA
January 14, 2016

Attorney General Greg Zoeller Files Lawsuit Against Group Of Alleged Home Repair, Landscape Scammers Targeting Indy Seniors

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller filed a lawsuit against a group of alleged landscape and home repair scammers who have swindled at least nine Indianapolis-area senior citizens into paying thousands of dollars for projects that were overpriced, poorly completed or never completed.

Zoeller’s lawsuit against C & C Tree Service filed in Marion County court lists 14 individuals allegedly involved in perpetrating the scam, in which the defendants would go door-to-door offering a wide range of home repair services, demand payment and then deliver shoddy or nonexistent work. Repairs that were offered included tree trimming, tree removal, chimney services, driveway repairs and more.

IOWA
January 26, 2016

Attorney General Tom Miller Announces Florida Magazine Seller to Cease Iowa Sales and Refund Iowans

Consumer Protection Division alleges company violated Iowa Door to Door Sales Act

A Miami-based magazine seller will stop door-to-door sales in Iowa and provide refunds to Iowans who request them, through an agreement with Attorney General Tom Miller.

The settlement with KLMN Readers Services Inc. and signed by company owner Michael G. Whitely, Sr., settles Miller’s allegations of non-compliance with the Iowa Door-to-Door Sales Act, misrepresentations by salespeople, and non-delivery of magazine subscriptions.

The agreement, called an assurance of voluntary compliance, requires the company to cease door-to-door magazine sales in Iowa, and provide full refunds to Iowa consumers who file complaints through March 31. The company will also pay $7,000 to the state’s consumer education and litigation fund.

Door-to-door sellers, on behalf of KLMN, crisscrossed Iowa from August through October, in at least 27 cities, according to company records.


December 17, 2015

Attorney General Tom Miller Announces Texas Lead Generation Business Agrees to Cease Deceptive Mailings to Iowans

“Senior benefits” insurance sales lead materials appeared as governmental mailings

A Dallas-based lead generation company that provides sales leads to direct marketing companies has agreed to stop sending insurance sales lead mailings to Iowans that appear to come from the government.

IOWA CONT’D
KramerDirect LLC, also known as KDirect LLC, and company owner Allyn Kramer, have agreed to refrain from misleading solicitation practices and pay $5,000 for enforcement of Iowa’s consumer fraud laws, through an agreement called an assurance of voluntary compliance. Kramer and his company denied wrongdoing.

The postcard-style mailings were directed to Iowans turning 65, and asked them to mail back their date of birth and phone number in order to obtain information about Medicare and other “senior benefits.”


December 15, 2015

Attorney General Tom Miller Announces Tennessee Buying Club Agrees to Halt Illegal Enrollment of Iowans and Make Refunds to Iowa Victims

$20,000 in refunds to go to more than 200 Iowans enrolled in SavingsGalore.com buying club

A Tennessee-based online merchandise retailer has agreed to pay nearly $20,000 in refunds to Iowans who were charged for memberships in the company=s online membership club.

Through an agreement called an assurance of voluntary compliance, Wishbone Marketing LLC, of Cordova, Tennessee, which operates the SavingsGalore.com website, will change its marketing practices and cooperate in making refunds to more than 200 Iowans who had been enrolled and charged for a membership.

The company and its owner, Barry Walker, also of Cordova, denied wrongdoing.

Consumers who think they may be due a refund don't need to do anything at this point. Company records are expected to provide the information needed for the Consumer Protection Division to contact affected Iowans about the refund process.

Wishbone Marketing will pay an additional $5,000 to cover the state's investigation costs.
December 3, 2015

**Attorney General Tom Miller Halts Deceptive Fundraising and Orders Business Reforms for Newspaper Archive Company**

*Court order bars Newspaper Archive Inc. and associated charity Global Way Makers, both with Cedar Rapids ties, from stealth collection of online donations*

An international newspaper archiving company and related non-profit, both with Cedar Rapids ties, are barred from using a pre-checked box to obtain charitable donation authorizations from the company’s subscribers, through an agreement with Attorney General Tom Miller.

The agreement, called a consent judgment, approved Thursday by Polk County District Court Judge Robert B. Hanson, requires Newspaper Archive Inc. to change its business practices in Iowa, including the notices and disclosures it provides to its online subscribers.

Consumers had complained about the company’s automatic subscription renewals, billing practices, restrictive refund policies, unexpected price increases, difficulty in cancelling, and unresponsive customer service.


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**KANSAS**

January 6, 2016

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Sues Door-To-Door Meat Sales Company**

Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt has sued an Iowa-based door-to-door meat sales company for violations of consumer protection laws in Kansas.

The attorney general filed suit in Shawnee County District Court against Christopher Maselka, and individual, and Iowa Steak Company, LLC, a/k/a Iowa Steak Company, a/k/a Iowa Steak. The company is an Iowa limited liability corporation owned by Mr. Maselka whose salesmen go door-to-door selling meat products. The allegations include two violations of the Kansas
Food Advertising and Sales Practices Act and five violations of the Kansas Consumer Protection Act.

Mr. Maselka was previously prohibited from engaging in such business practices in Kansas by a 1998 court order for committing similar violations. At that time, the defendant was operating with a co-defendant, Rodney Y. Creighton, and doing business under the name America’s Choice Steak.


December 30, 2015

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Arizona Business To Cease Collecting Payments, Pay Penalty For Deceptive Practices**

An Arizona company has been ordered to refund consumers who request reimbursement and pay $10,000 in penalties and fees for deceiving Kansans into purchasing household products under the guise that the company’s proceeds went to support a charitable purpose, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

American Handicapped & Disadvantaged Workers, Inc., of Phoenix, and its president and CEO Adli Najib Dasuqi of Waterford, Mich., admitted to calling Kansas consumers and attempting to sell them various household goods, including light bulbs, trash bags, kitchen scissors and cleaning products. The telemarketers falsely exaggerated the nature of the business, misleading consumers to believe the company was a charity or had a charitable purpose. The prices the company charged for these products grossly exceeded the market price for similar products.

KANSAS CONT’D

December 10, 2015

Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces California Man Fined For Unauthorized Law Practice

A California man will pay $6,000 in penalties and expenses for violating the Kansas Consumer Protection Act, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

In a consent judgment recently approved by Judge Larry Hendricks in Shawnee County District Court, Abdul-Kareem Ali of San Ramon, Calif., agreed to pay the penalty and is prohibited from further engaging in the unauthorized practice of law in the state, after practicing law in Kansas without a license and engaging in deceptive business practices.

Ali formerly did business as AQ Square Consulting, LLC, in Kansas City, Mo., and engaged in unlicensed legal representation of Kansas and Missouri consumers in the insurance claims process. Ali represented and negotiated insurance claims for individuals who were not knowledgeable about the insurance claims process, accepting contingency fees for his services. He also offered his legal opinions to consumers and made misleading statements to those consumers. At no time was Ali licensed to practice law in Kansas.


KENTUCKY

December 21, 2015

Attorney General Jack Conway Announces Indictment and Arrest Following Online Scam Investigation in Washington County

Attorney General Jack Conway and his Department of Criminal Investigations (DCI) today announced the indictment and arrest of a Washington County woman accused of operating a fraudulent online scam to raise money for a fictitious dying child.

On Dec. 16, a Washington County grand jury indicted 63-year-old Frankie Louise Yates of Springfield on one count of theft by deception over
$10,000. Yates was arrested the following day by the Washington County Sheriff’s Office.

The indictment stems from a complaint received last month by the Washington County Sheriff’s Office alleging that Yates was soliciting money and gifts online for a terminally ill boy. An investigation by the sheriff’s office and DCI investigators determined that the child did not exist. Additionally, investigators identified approximately 70 victims from across the U.S. and Canada who had donated more than $16,000 in toys, books and gift cards to Yates over a three-to-five-year period.

http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneralJackConway&prId=5

MARYLAND
January 6, 2016

**Attorney General Brian E. Frosh Announces Anne Arundel Home Builder Ordered to Pay Nearly $600K for Consumer Protection Violations**

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that an Anne Arundel County home builder who violated multiple consumer protection laws must pay almost $600,000 in restitution, damages, penalties and legal expenses.

The Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division issued a final order concluding that Fusion Modular Green Construction, LLC, and its principals, William E. Sims III and Joshua S. Sims., entered into contracts with four families to construct new homes in Anne Arundel and Montgomery counties, but then failed to begin or complete construction of the homes after collecting substantial deposits and payments from the buyers.

http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2016/010616.html
MARYLAND CONT’D

December 11, 2016

**Attorney General Brian Frosh Targets Unregistered Shell Companies Obtaining Lead-Paint Settlements From Victims**

*Court Filings Seek Greater Transparency in Potentially Harmful Financial Transactions Involving Lead-Paint Poisoning Victims and Other Injured Marylanders*

As part of an effort to protect victims of lead paint poisoning from financial harm, Attorney General Brian Frosh announced today that he has moved to block certain financial transactions in which unregistered apparent shell companies seek to obtain long-term settlement payments for a fraction of their value from impaired and injured individuals.

The Office of the Attorney General has asked to intervene in a number of cases involving proposed transfers of structured settlement payments. In each case, the company proposing the transaction was not registered to do business in Maryland. In response to the Attorney General’s filings, four unregistered companies have withdrawn requests for court approval to obtain the payment stream. At least two of the proposed transactions involved victims of lead paint poisoning.

http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2015/121115.html

MASSACHUSETTS

January 4, 2016

**Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Worcester-Based Convenience Store Chain Agrees to Pay Up to $25,000 to Resolve Allegations of Race Discrimination**

*Settlement Resolves Allegations that District Manager Discriminated Against Customer; AG Encourages Consumers to Report Instances of Discrimination*

A Worcester-based convenience store chain has agreed to pay up to $25,000 to resolve allegations of discriminatory treatment of a Hispanic customer, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The assurance of discontinuance with Honey Farms, Inc. (Honey Farms), filed today in Suffolk Superior Court, resolves allegations that a district store
MASSACHUSETTS CONT’D

manager unfairly targeted and falsely accused a Hispanic customer of shoplifting at a Worcester store location.

The AG’s Civil Rights Division conducted an investigation into certain acts and practices of Honey Farms after receiving a complaint from the customer involved in the incident. The AG’s Office alleges that in a March 2015 incident, a district manager followed the customer out of the store, accused him of shoplifting, and used derogatory language referencing the customer’s Hispanic heritage. Security video footage reviewed during the investigation confirmed that the customer had not stolen anything.


December 28, 2015

Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Dorchester Store to Pay More than $100,000 for Failure to Pay Proper Wages, Failure to Keep Accurate Payroll Records

Company to Pay Restitution and Penalties for Failing to Comply with Massachusetts Wage and Hour Laws

A Dorchester grocery store and its owner have agreed to pay more than $100,000 for failing to properly pay their employees in violation of the state’s wage and hour laws and for failure to maintain required payroll records, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Truong-Thinh Market, Inc. and its president, Joseph Pham, have agreed to pay more than $84,000 in restitution to workers and more than $21,000 in penalties for failure to pay minimum and overtime wages and for failing to keep accurate payroll records.

Attorney General Maura Healey Sues Major Debt Collection Law Firm Over Widespread Consumer Abuses

AG Alleges Law Firm Routinely Filed Lawsuits Against Consumers without Proof of Debt Owed; Threatened Consumers on Fixed Incomes

Attorney General Maura Healey has sued one of the largest debt collection law firms in Massachusetts and its two owners, alleging that the firm repeatedly sued consumers for debts they did not owe or debts that were inaccurate. The AG alleges the company violated the state’s consumer protection laws in its pursuit of debts and its use of judicial proceedings.

The complaint, filed on Monday in Suffolk Superior Court against Lustig, Glaser, & Wilson, P.C. (the Lustig Firm) and its principal owners Kenneth Wilson and Ronald Lustig, alleges that since 2011, the Lustig Firm filed more than 100,000 debt collection lawsuits in Massachusetts largely based on inaccurate information about unsubstantiated debts owned by national debt buyers. Many of these lawsuits were filed against consumers whose only source of income was social security or other types of income that were legally exempt from court-ordered payment.


Attorney General Maura Healey, DOER Secure $3.5 Million in Savings for Liberty Utilities Customers

Agreement Provides Funding for Low and Middle Income Customers, Prohibits Company from Imposing New Rate Increases for Three Years

Attorney General Maura Healey, the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and the Low-Income Weatherization and Fuel Assistance Program Network have negotiated an agreement with Liberty Utilities Corp. d/b/a Liberty Utilities that reduces the company’s proposed rate increase by $3.5 million and prevents it from imposing any other distribution rate increases for three years.
The agreement also provides $100,000 to equip low and moderate income customers with wireless heating controls to assist with lowering the cost of heating their homes beginning in the 2016 heating season.


December 4, 2015

**Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Former Corporate Officer of Cape Cod Disabled Veterans Organization Ordered to Pay $92,000 for Stealing from the Charity**

*Restitution to be Returned to Disabled American Veterans, Inc.*

A former corporate officer of the Hyannis chapter of Disabled American Veterans, Inc. has been ordered to pay $92,000 in restitution after he was convicted on larceny charges for stealing more than $100,000 from the charitable organization, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

Judge Rufo ordered Richard Trott Sr., age 65, of East Sandwich to pay $92,000 in restitution to the Disabled American Veterans, Inc. A Barnstable Superior Court jury found Trott guilty on four counts of Larceny over $250 in October. After the verdict, Judge Robert Rufo sentenced Trott to two years in the House of Correction with 18 months to serve and the balance suspended for a probationary period upon his release.


December 3, 2015

**Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Insurance Company to Pay More $200,000 Over Claims of Failing to Cover Mandated Benefits, Selling Unauthorized Health Insurance**

American Fidelity Assurance Company (AFA) has agreed to pay $209,000 to settle allegations that it failed to cover mandated benefits required by state law and sold unauthorized health insurance to Massachusetts consumers, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.
MASSACHUSETTS CONT’D

According to the complaint, filed along with the consent judgment in Suffolk Superior Court today, AFA violated the state’s consumer protection laws by excluding coverage of certain health services required by Massachusetts law, including behavioral health, “pap” test screening, mammography, contraception and preventive care for newborns and children up to age six.

The complaint also alleges AFA issued health insurance in Massachusetts that was not authorized to be issued because it was not filed first with the Division of Insurance.

Under the terms of the consent judgment, approved by the court today, AFA must pay $209,000, including $134,000 in consumer relief and $75,000 to the Commonwealth, which includes $60,000 for the Local Consumer Aid Fund.


MICHIGAN
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Bill Schuette Secures Second Conviction of Saginaw Ponzi Schemer

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced he has secured a second conviction of Ponzi schemer Joel Wilson, 33, of Saginaw. The second conviction is a result of Wilson spreading his financial crimes across multiple Michigan counties. After being extradited from Germany, Wilson was convicted in Bay County on March 5, 2015, of nine felonies, including racketeering, larceny and fraudulent sale of securities.

http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-375004--,00.html
January 26, 2016

**Attorney General Bill Schuette Stops Collections by High Interest Auto Title Loan Company**

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today was granted a Preliminary Injunction against Liquidation, LLC and several associated alias companies, stopping them from any collection activity on illegal title loans they provided to Michigan consumers.

The Ingham County Circuit Court’s Preliminary Injunction replaces the Temporary Restraining Order issued on January 14, 2016. If the company and officials continue to ignore the lawsuit, Schuette will ask the court for a default judgment. If a default judgement is entered, this effectively cancels the loans and allows affected consumers to clear their titles.

[http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-374883--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-374883--,00.html)

December 18, 2015

**Attorney General Bill Schuette: Orchard Lake Attorney Sentenced in Fake Mortgage Assistance Scheme**

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced the sentencing of Steven Barry Ruza, 52, of Orchard Lake, former owner of Home Legal Group Inc., for one felony count of Conducting a Criminal Enterprise. Ruza was sentenced to 12 months in Oakland County Jail, followed by five years of probation by Judge Nanci Grant in Oakland County’s 6th Circuit Court. Ruza pleaded guilty to the charges of defrauding his victims with a fake mortgage assistance scheme in September.

[http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-371847--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-371847--,00.html)
December 10, 2015

Attorney General Bill Schuette: Chesapeake Energy Corp. Settlement Notifications Mailed to Northern Michigan Landowners

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today announced that his Corporate Oversight Division is in the process of mailing claim forms to approximately 700 Northern Michigan residents who were affected by a [racketeering and bid–rigging scheme involving Chesapeake Energy Corporation](http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-371011--,00.html) that caused lease prices on their land to plummet and defrauded hundreds of Michigan residents in 2010.

MINNESOTA

January 13, 2016

Attorney General Lori Swanson Announces Carnival Operator Sued for Stiffing County and Town Fairs Throughout Minnesota

A carnival company based in Anoka, Minnesota was sued by Attorney General Lori Swanson for stiffing county and town fairs around Minnesota for thousands of dollars each and not showing up on fair day with the promised rides, games, and food concessions.

The fairs paid the company—which goes by the names Minnesota’s Magic Midway, Inc. or E.A.R. Carnival Company—up to $8,500 in down payments to run summer carnivals. The company, which is owned by Edward A. Reinke of Anoka, failed to appear at a number of these fairs but kept the money.

[http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20160113CarnivalFraud.asp](http://www.ag.state.mn.us/Office/PressRelease/20160113CarnivalFraud.asp)
MISSOURI
January 12, 2016

Attorney General Chris Koster Announces Program to Provide Consumers Refunds For Macaroni Grill Gift Cards

Attorney General Chris Koster announced today that his office reached an agreement with Romano’s Macaroni Grill, which will allow consumers who purchased gift cards from any Macaroni Grill location in Missouri during 2014 to receive a refund of any balance remaining on the card. About 500 Missouri consumers are still holding Macaroni Grill gift cards.

The Attorney General’s Office began looking into the matter at the end of 2014 when Macaroni Grill announced that it was immediately closing all of its Missouri locations, and consumers began to complain that they had recently purchased gift cards believing that they could redeem them at a local restaurant.


NEVADA
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing of Las Vegas Man For Securities Fraud

Defendant Ordered to pay $100,000 in Restitution

Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Peter Ortmann, 60, of Las Vegas, was sentenced after pleading guilty in 2007 to one count of sale of unregistered securities, a category “B” felony. The fraud was committed between February and December 2006.

Ortmann sold unregistered securities to a victim who invested $100,000 with him. After pleading guilty to the crime of sale of unregistered securities in 2007, Ortmann failed to appear for sentencing, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He was arrested in Washington State almost eight years later, and was subsequently sentenced.
January 22, 2016

**Attorney General Laxalt Announces Indictment Of Six Defendants For Timeshare Resale Fraud**

*All victims were over 60 years of age*

Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Alan Rodrigues, 56, Jonas Bowen, 62, Larry Smith, 43, William Harper, 62, Jozsef Mate, 73 and Tracy Jones, 54, were indicted by the Clark County Grand Jury on 15 counts of theft and one count of multiple transactions involving fraud or deceit. The six defendants were indicted for multiple felonies related to a timeshare fraud scam that defrauded more than 15 victims. The theft counts also allege that the victims were over the age of 60, carrying an additional penalty. The scam was operated between August 2013 and July 2014.

According to the indictment, the defendants are accused of operating a business known as World Travel Access that would target timeshare owners eager to sell their timeshares. The company would typically invite victims to a presentation, during which time the defendants would explain the process of transferring timeshare ownership. Victims would be charged thousands of dollars for the purported transfer of their timeshare to World Travel Access, when in fact, the transfers never took place. Most victims were not aware they had fallen victim to a scam until they received bills from their respective timeshare companies for yearly fees.

NEW HAMPSHIRE  
December 14, 2015

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster Resolves Allegations of Consumer Protection Act Violations Against Hinsdale, NH Veterinarian

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster announces that the Consumer Protection and Antitrust Bureau has entered into Assurances of Discontinuance with Dr. Carlton Kibbee, DVM and Paula Fitzpatrick to resolve allegations that their veterinary practice engaged in unfair or deceptive business practices in violation of the New Hampshire Consumer Protection Act.

Dr. Kibbee and Ms. Fitzpatrick own and operate Animal Fitness on Monument Road in Hinsdale, NH. Dr. Kibbee is a licensed veterinarian. Ms. Fitzpatrick is not licensed to perform veterinary medicine.


NEW JERSEY  
January 19, 2016

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Settles Action Against Middlesex County Company That Marketed “Survival Shelters”

The Office of the Attorney General and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs have reached a settlement with Titan Shelters, LLC, and its owner, Alfred L. Demola, a/k/a Al Demola, under which consumers will be receiving restitution for underground survival shelters that they paid for but ultimately did not receive.

The state’s seven-count complaint, filed in March 2015 in Middlesex County Superior Court, alleged that Titan Shelters and Demola violated the Consumer Fraud Act, the Home Improvement Contractors’ Registration Act, the Contractor Registration Regulations, the Home Improvement Regulations, and the Regulations Governing General Advertising. The state’s Complaint alleged, among other things, that: defendants sold underground survival shelters and products to consumers and then failed to deliver any of the contracted-for products; and advertised and offered for sale such products to consumers in New Jersey without being registered as a home improvement

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contractor with the Division. The state’s complaint also alleged that defendants represented that they maintained a manufacturing facility in Cranbury, New Jersey, which was not the case. The Division’s investigation revealed that no manufacturing facility for the shelters existed anywhere in New Jersey.

http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160119b.html

January 8, 2016

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Files Actions Alleging Unlawful Pricing Practices at Advance Auto and Pep Boys Stores

The New Jersey Division Consumer Affairs, through its Office of Consumer Protection and its Office of Weights and Measures, has filed actions against Advance Stores Company, Inc., d/b/a “Advance Auto” stores, and Pep Boys – Manny Moe & Jack of Delaware, Inc., d/b/a “Pep Boys,” both of which sell auto parts and perform auto repairs at their retail locations throughout New Jersey.

The civil complaints, filed in Essex County Superior Court, are the result of a joint initiative by the Division’s Office of Consumer Protection and Office of Weights and Measures, designed to ensure that automotive parts stores comply with consumer laws regarding price scanning, disclosure of merchandise pricing, and notices as to the right to a written estimate for automotive repairs. As part of this initiative, the Division inspected seven stores operated by Advance Stores and five stores operated by Pep Boys in New Jersey.

http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160108a.html
January 6, 2016

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Files Legal Action Against Unlicensed Veterinarian in South Jersey**

The Office of the Attorney General and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs have filed an action against Jacque Smith of Williamstown, after she allegedly deceived South Jersey horse owners into believing that she was either a licensed veterinarian or a university student studying veterinary medicine and thereby gained permission to treat their horses, some of which died after being treated by her.

[http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160106a.html](http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160106a.html)

January 4, 2016

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Cites Pet Shops Statewide for Violating the Pet Purchase Protection Act**

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs has cited pet shops throughout the State for failing to comply with laws designed to protect consumers from purchasing unhealthy pets.

Violations cited include a failure to label dogs’ and cats’ cages with each animal’s breeding history, medical background, and other information required under amendments made to the Pet Purchase Protection Act, effective earlier this year.

[http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160104a.html](http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160104a.html)
NEW JERSEY CONT’D

December 23, 2015

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Obtains Court Order Shutting Down Unregistered Contractor Who Allegedly Took Money from Elderly Consumers for Repairs That Were Never Completed**

The Office of the Attorney General and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs have filed suit against Leroy N. Brown, an unregistered contractor who did business as “B&K Masonry & Chimney,” for misrepresenting himself as a registered contractor and for using deceptive sales tactics, including proclamations of imminent health and safety risks, to induce mostly elderly consumers into purchasing expensive chimney repairs that were never completed.

On December 17, 2015, a State Superior Court Judge granted the State’s request for a preliminary injunction, which froze Brown’s assets and also barred Brown from performing any additional home improvement work in New Jersey. The Court had previously frozen one bank account used by Brown to conduct business as “B&K Masonry & Chimney” and the State is in the process of identifying additional assets.

Brown, who maintained business addresses in Teaneck; Babylon, New York; and West Babylon, New York; allegedly committed multiple violations of the Consumer Fraud Act and Home Improvement Contractors’ Registration Act. Brown also faces enhanced civil penalties because the majority of his victims are senior citizens.

[http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20151223a.html](http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20151223a.html)
Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces Former Morris County Investment Advisor Pleads Guilty to Organizing $1,178,000 Securities and Annuities Fraud Scheme

Defendant and Husband Also Plead Guilty to Conspiracy and Securities Fraud in the Scam

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman and the Office of the Insurance Fraud Prosecutor (OIFP) announced today that a former Morris County investment advisor pleaded guilty to fabricating and mailing more than 100 financial account statements that inflated 14 of her clients’ accounts by a combined $818,000.

http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20151214a.html

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Findings of Investigation into Consumer Abuses in Live Entertainment Ticket Industry

Multi-Year Investigation Finds More Than Half Of All Tickets To Many Popular Concerts Are Reserved For Event Insiders And Pre-Sale Customers Before Tickets Even Go On Sale To General Public

Brokers Deploy Illegal Bots To Buy Thousands Of Tickets Within Seconds, Harming Consumers And Defying Industry Efforts

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today released the results of a wide-ranging investigation into the concert and sports ticket industry. The investigation uncovered practices and abuses that prevent New York consumers from accessing tickets at affordable prices – or even accessing them at all.

Schneiderman also announced settlements with two ticket brokers that were illegally operating without a ticket reseller license. The businesses, MSMSS, LLC and Extra Base Tickets, LLC, have sold thousands of tickets to events in New York. The settlements require that the companies and their principals maintain a ticket reseller license and pay penalties for having operated
illegally. MSMSS will pay $80,000 in penalties and Extra Base Tickets will pay $65,000.


January 22, 2016

**A.G. Schneiderman, State Comptroller DiNapoli & DOI Commissioner Peters Announce The Sentence Of Non-Profit Executive Convicted In Theft Scheme**

*Dorothy Ogundu Was Convicted In October Last Year Of Using Her Non-Profit To Steal Nearly $300K In City, State And Federal Grant Funds*

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli and New York City Department of Investigation (NYC DOI) Commissioner Mark Peters today announced that Dorothy Ogundu, a nonprofit executive convicted for pocketing taxpayer dollars intended for public services and capital improvements in New York City was sentenced to 1-3 years of incarceration by the Honorable Barry A. Schwartz. A multi-agency joint investigation, including NYC DOI and two federal agencies, exposed the theft of approximately $300,000 in public funds provided by New York State, the New York City Council, and federal earmark grants. On October 22, 2015, a jury convicted Dorothy Ogundu on 29 counts, including Grand Larceny in the Second Degree.

Dorothy N. Ogundu engaged in a scheme to defraud the City of New York, the State of New York and the United States using her not-for-profit corporation, Angeldocs, Inc. Angeldocs received a total of twelve government grants. Ogundu stole a portion of each of the twelve government grants by filing fraudulent requests for reimbursement and making false statements to the government agencies administering the grants. Ogundu used the money she stole from these government grants to pay the mortgage and utilities on a commercial property she owned, make improvements to that property to increase its value, purchase and ship vehicles to Nigeria, and make other purchases for her personal benefit and for the benefit of her for-profit business.

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Lawsuit Against Auto Dealerships For Alleged Deceptive Practices That Illegally Inflated Car Prices

A.G. Investigation Uncovers Alleged Fraud At Koeppel Auto Dealerships In Queens; Office Also Announces Separate Settlements Reached With Nassau And Suffolk County Auto Dealerships

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a lawsuit against several Queens auto dealerships: Koeppel Nissan, Inc., Koeppel Cars Of Bayside, Inc. d/b/a Koeppel Subaru, Koeppel Mazda, Koeppel Auto Group, and Koeppel Volkswagen, Inc., (collectively, “Koeppel” or “Koeppel dealerships”). The lawsuit, filed in New York Supreme Court, alleges that the Koeppel dealerships, all owned by the Koeppel family, unlawfully sold “after-sale” products and services, including credit repair and identity theft protection services to 1,426 consumers that sometimes exceeded a cost of $2,000 per consumer. The Attorney General also announced new settlements with dealerships in Nassau and Suffolk county for selling credit repair and identity theft protection services to consumers.


A.G. Schneiderman Announces $1 Million Settlement With Officials Of So-Called Children’s Leukemia Foundation And Their Auditor

Foundation To Close Permanently, Defendants To Be Banned From Working In The Non-Profit Sector

Former Officials Admit To Financial Misconduct And To Years Of Fundraising Abuses And Misrepresentations, Including Falsifying Audit Reports

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has reached a settlement agreement resolving a lawsuit brought against the Brooklyn-based National Children’s Leukemia Foundation (“NCLF”), its founder and leader Zvi Shor, its president Yehuda Gutwein, the founder’s son, Shlomo Shor, and its auditor, Shlomo Donn. The Attorney General had filed a
nine-count petition to shut down NCLF in July 2015 in Kings County Supreme Court.

Through this settlement, NCLF will be permanently closed, its former officers barred from serving as fiduciaries of any New York charity, with nation-wide bans for the founder and his son. The former officers will also be barred from soliciting funds on behalf of any charity. The Attorney General will also recover $380,000 dollars, most of which will be directed to charities helping children with leukemia. Shor, age 64 and a resident of Brooklyn, New York, forfeited claims to an additional $612,844 in back-pay, in addition to a claim to a life-time pension and other benefits. NCLF’s former accountant and auditor must report the identities of any non-profit clients to the Attorney General’s Charities Bureau for the next three years. The settlement is subject to approval by the court.


January 14, 2016

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Convictions Of NYC School Construction And Housing Authority Contractor And Labor Brokers Who Stole Thousands From Workers

Contractor and Labor Brokers Convicted Of Failing To Pay Prevailing Wages And Stealing Thousands Of Dollars In Wages

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman and New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Mark G. Peters announced today the convictions and sentencing of a contractor, Baldlev Singh, who with his brother Avtar Singh, also operated as labor brokers, for underpaying and stealing wages from workers on New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) and New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) public works projects.

DOI Commissioner Mark G. Peters said, “These contractors exploited honest workers for their own personal gain, and rightfully, have been barred from working on City projects for the foreseeable future. Prevailing wage fraud cannot be taken lightly – it creates potential public safety issues and takes advantage of some of the City’s most vulnerable populations. We will continue to aggressively pursue these cases and assist in bringing them to prosecution. I thank the Attorney General and his staff for their partnership in this
important area." The initial arrests in December 2014 and April 2015 stemmed from a joint investigation by the SCA and NYCHA into underpayment and kickback schemes on projects at P.S. 196K, a public school in Brooklyn, P.S. 7x, a public school in the Bronx, and the Pomonok Houses in Queens.


January 6, 2016

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement with Uber to Enhance Rider Privacy**

*Uber Agrees To Encrypt Rider Geo-Location Information And Enhance Its Data Security Practices*

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a settlement with Uber that requires the company to adopt leading data security protection practices to protect its riders’ personal information. In late November 2014, the Attorney General opened an investigation into Uber’s collection, maintenance and disclosure of rider personal information amid reports that Uber executives had access to riders’ locations and that Uber displayed this information in an aerial view, known internally as “God View.” Separately, on February 26, 2015, Uber notified the Attorney General that as early as September 2014, it had experienced a data breach where Uber driver names and driver license numbers were accessed by an unauthorized third party. This settlement resolves both investigations.

December 29, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Agreement With Albany Urgent Care Center That Misled Consumers About Its Participation In Unitedhealthcare Empire Plan**

*WorkFitMedical, LLC Will Pay Nearly $17,000 In Restitution To Consumers; Agrees To Enhance Disclosure Policy*

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced an agreement with WorkFitMedical, LLC, a provider of occupational and urgent care services, to provide clear, detailed information to consumers about its participation with health plans. The agreement is the result of an investigation into WorkFit, a health care company that had purchased an urgent care center in Albany. While attempting to contract with UnitedHealthcare/Empire Plan, WorkFit represented to consumers that it participated in UnitedHealthcare’s network, and then billed consumers for the entire cost of the visit - over and above the consumer's co-payment. The agreement requires that WorkFit provide nearly $17,000 in restitution to consumers who paid for services rendered in excess of the amount of co-payment required by UnitedHealthcare/Empire Plan (Empire Plan) for seeing an in-network participating provider. WorkFit has also agreed to pay $12,500 in costs and penalties to the state.


December 10, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea Of Restaurant Owner For Failing To Pay $47,000 In Minimum Wage And Overtime**

Elisa Parto Of Elisa’s Food & Plus, Inc. In Port Chester Failed To Pay The Legally Required Minimum Wage And Overtime Between 2012 And 2014

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the guilty plea of Elisa Parto, owner of the restaurant Elisa’s Food & Plus, Inc., in Port Chester, NY for failing to pay minimum wage and overtime. As a condition of the plea, Elisa Parto will be required to pay $47,000 in restitution in unpaid wages. The Attorney General’s Office anticipates distributing the $47,000 in unpaid
wages to 6 former employees. Elisa Parto and the corporation are set to be sentenced on March 10, 2016.


NORTH CAROLINA

January 8, 2016

Travel Club Banned From Face-To-Face Marketing, AG Cooper Says

Many Festiva Adventure Club members will get refunds, have contracts cancelled

A travel club that promised members great savings on trips but failed to deliver is now banned from face-to-face sales in the state for three years and must pay refunds, Attorney General Roy Cooper said today.

Under a settlement with Cooper’s office, Festiva Development Group of Nevada will pay $286,144 for consumer refunds and reform the way it markets travel club memberships in North Carolina, including being banned from marketing in person in the state for three years.

Festiva, based in Asheville, sold and marketed memberships for Festiva Adventure Clubs at resorts in locations such as Atlantic Beach, Banner Elk, and Charleston. According to consumers who complained to Cooper’s Consumer Protection Division, the company used aggressive marketing tactics, promising them a free hotel stay, free laptop or free dinner to attend a 90-minute sales presentation.

OHIO

January 6, 2016

Attorney General DeWine Seeks Consumer Restitution from Propane Supplier Accused of Failing to Deliver

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced a lawsuit against Thrifty Propane for misrepresenting its services and failing to deliver propane to consumers across the state.

In the lawsuit, the Attorney General accuses Thrifty Propane of violating Ohio’s Consumer Sales Practices Act and seeks restitution for consumers plus an end to any violations of Ohio’s consumer laws.


PENNSYLVANIA

January 20, 2016

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane's Office Reaches $450K Settlement With CVS Chains In Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane’s office today announced a $450,000 consumer protection settlement with Pennsylvania CVS Pharmacy, L.L.C. The settlement follows allegations the company violated a 2010 agreement in which it agreed to address concerns related to the sale of expired over the counter drugs, infant formula and dairy products.

The settlement is the result of an investigation by the Office of Attorney General’s Health Care Section, which also worked on behalf of consumers on the 2010 agreement. The settlement was filed today in the form of a consent decree.

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2281
January 14, 2016

**Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane’s Office Files Lawsuit Against Philadelphia Travel Agencies Accused Of Deceptive Business Practices**

Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane’s office today announced a lawsuit filed against Philadelphia travel agencies that operated under the company names Fly America, Fly American, Africano Travel Services and Fly USA Travel. The lawsuit was filed amid allegations the travel agencies failed to deliver airline tickets to customers who paid for travel arrangements to be made on their behalf.

The lawsuit was filed by the Office of Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. It names the defendants Fly America Travel & Tour, Inc. and Fly American Travel & Tours, Inc., as well as president of the companies, Mohannad Samara.

[https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2280](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2280)

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**VERMONT**

December 9, 2015

**Attorney General Sorrell Settles With Motor Vehicle Advertiser And Issues Motor Vehicle Advertising Warning**

The Vermont Attorney General’s Office entered into an [Assurance of Discontinuance](https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2280) with Aspen Marketing Services, LLC after the Attorney General’s investigation revealed that over 81,000 letters Aspen sent on behalf of five GM motor vehicle dealers misrepresented that the consumers had been specially selected to participate in an exclusive motor vehicle buyback program.

The letters sent to consumers misrepresented that certain car dealers had been selected as a “host location” for a “unique Buyback Event,” and that the dealers were in “desperate need” of their particular vehicles to “fulfill special used vehicle requests.” Consumers were told that “due to the nature of the event,” they must bring the letter to be admitted because the Buyback event would “not be advertised to the general public.”
VIRGINIA
December 18 2015

Attorney General Mark Herring Announces Settlement Valued At $4 Million With Online Lender

More than 5,000 Virginians will benefit from $4 million in forgiven interest and fees owed to MoneyKey and $18,000 in restitution will be provided to another 170 affected consumers who have already paid off their loans.

Attorney General Mark Herring announced today that he has reached a settlement with MoneyKey, Inc., a Delaware-based online consumer lender, for alleged violations of the state's consumer finance statutes and the Virginia Consumer Protection Act (VCPA). The settlement will provide more than $4 million in forgiven interest and fees to 5,000 Virginians who defaulted on, or are currently paying off, their cash advances, and $18,000 in restitution to more than 170 consumers who fully repaid their cash advances.

The settlement announced today resolves allegations that MoneyKey violated Virginia's consumer finance statutes by imposing illegal charges on borrowers who received open-ended credit loans. It also resolves allegations that MoneyKey violated the VCPA by misrepresenting its licensure status in Virginia and by misrepresenting that its loans were compliant with Virginia's open-end credit statute, when they, in fact, were not.
WASHINGTON
January 15, 2016

Attorney General Bob Ferguson Announces Kirkland Car Dealer To Pay Penalties For Deceptive Mailers

Claimed cars were subject to recall, appeared to be official notices

Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced that Kirkland car dealership will pay $74,000 to resolve allegations it sent out thousands of promotional mailers mimicking official recall notices.

Rairdon’s Dodge Chrysler Jeep of Kirkland agreed to pay $35,125 in civil penalties and $39,210 in costs and fees, for a total of $74,435.

The car dealer was accused of sending 7,025 mailers that looked very similar to the form used by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s recall notifications, but were in fact promotional materials.

The mailers notified recipients of possible recalls and offered to purchase their vehicles, but failed to clearly and conspicuously disclose that the offer to buy was independent from any recall notification.


December 16, 2015

Attorney General Bob Ferguson Sues One Of World’s Biggest Tech Support Providers To Stop Deceptive Scam

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Washingtonians scammed up to $540 each

Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced a lawsuit against one of the biggest independent tech support providers in the world, iYogi, and its President, Vishal Dhar, to stop a scam that uses deception and scare tactics to pressure consumers into buying unnecessary tech support services.

The lawsuit, filed in King County Superior Court, alleges iYogi’s tactics are unfair and deceptive business practices that violate Washington’s Consumer Protection Act. The lawsuit also alleges iYogi induced consumers to install unnecessary software as part of its ploy to coerce them into buying tech
support services, a violation of Washington’s Computer Spyware Act.

The state seeks to stop these illegal business practices and recover money for Washington victims. The total number of Washingtonians affected will be identified during the lawsuit, but is estimated to be in the hundreds, if not thousands. The state may seek up to $2,000 in civil penalties for each violation of the Consumer Protection Act and $100,000 per violation of the Computer Spyware Act.

Tech support scams are a national problem with local ramifications. According to Microsoft, an estimated 71,000 Washingtonians lose $33 million each year to these schemes. Nationwide, an estimated 3.3 million Americans suffer $1.5 billion in annual losses from tech support scams.


December 10 2015

**Attorney General Bob Ferguson Takes On Everett Immigration Scammer Targeting Russian-Speaking Community**

In the latest action in a crackdown on illegal assistance to immigrants, Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced a lawsuit against an Everett man accused of advertising immigration law services, when he is not an attorney or accredited to provide such services.

Michael Bendzar published at least 73 advertisements in Russian-language publications since December 2013 advertising “immigration services” through his business, Michael’s Office.

The lawsuit alleges that Bendzar’s representations violate the Washington Immigration Services Fraud Prevention Act (ISFPA) and the Consumer Protection Act because he is not an attorney or an accredited immigration representative.

Bendzar is accused of 73 violations of the Consumer Protection Act, and the state is seeking civil penalties and an injunction preventing Bendzar from advertising immigration services. The state is permitted to seek up to $2,000 in civil penalties for each violation.
The ads refer to Bendzar as a “notarius,” the Russian word for “notary.” In many Russian-speaking countries, however, a notarius is an attorney or a person with other advanced legal training. In the United States, a notary is a person authorized to administer an oath or witness the signing of papers, not someone qualified to provide legal assistance.


WEST VIRGINIA

December 10, 2015

Attorney General Morrisey Reaches $160M Settlement with Frontier Communications

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey announced today an estimated $160 million settlement with Frontier Communications to resolve complaints involving Internet speeds provided to consumers.

The multi-faceted settlement requires Frontier to invest at least $150 million in capital expenditures to increase Internet speeds across West Virginia and provide access to areas currently without high-speed service. It also lowers monthly rates for affected consumers and contributes $500,000 to the state’s Consumer Protection Fund.

The agreement is the largest, independently negotiated consumer protection settlement in West Virginia history.

Attorney General Morrisey believes the Frontier settlement, over a three-year period, will help provide high-speed Internet coverage to most remaining parts of unconnected, rural West Virginia.

December 16, 2015

47 State Attorneys General and United States Department of Justice Announces $39 Million Civil Fraud Settlement Against Qualitest Pharmaceuticals For Selling Half-Strength Fluoride Supplements

Preet Bharara, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, Scott J. Lampert, Special Agent in Charge of the New York Regional Office for the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Health and Human Services (“HHS-OIG”), and Diego Rodriguez, the Assistant Director-in-Charge of the New York Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (“FBI”), and Patrick E. McFarland, the Inspector General for the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (“OPM”) announced a $39 million settlement against Vintage Pharmaceuticals, LLC, d/b/a QUALITEST PHARMACEUTICALS; Vintage’S corporate parent Endo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.; and seven of their corporate subsidiaries or affiliates (collectively, “QUALITEST”) in a civil fraud lawsuit. This global settlement resolves federal claims under the False Claims Act, 31 U.S.C. § 3729 et seq., that allege QUALITEST sold chewable fluoride tablets that contained less than half the amount of fluoride ion indicated on the drug label and caused federal healthcare programs to be fraudulently billed for these tablets, and also will resolve numerous state law civil fraud claims.

MEDICAID FRAUD CASES AND SETTLEMENTS

ALABAMA
January 15, 2016

Attorney General Luther Strange Announces Conviction Of Owner Of Macon County Counseling Service For Billing Medicaid for Services not Provided

Attorney General Luther Strange announced the conviction today of the owner of a Tuskegee counseling service for billing the Alabama Medicaid Agency for services that were not provided to Medicaid recipients. Lula Jones Bridges, 53, of Notasulga, is the owner of Hope for Families and Community Services, a nonprofit counseling service. Bridges pleaded guilty today before Montgomery County Circuit Judge J.R. Gaines to one count of Medicaid fraud, a Class C felony. No sentencing date has been set.

http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-758

ALASKA
December 11, 2015

Attorney General Craig W. Richards Announces Good Faith Services Owner Sentenced to 3 years for Fraudulently Billing Medicaid

The Alaska Department of Law, Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, announced today that 56-year-old Agnes Francisco was sentenced to 3 years of active incarceration, plus 10 years of probation. Judge William Morse also ordered Ms. Francisco to pay a $50,000 fine. Ms. Francisco pled guilty to Attempted Medical Assistance Fraud in association with her company, Good Faith Services, LLC, during the years 2008-2013.

At the same hearing, Good Faith Services, LLC, and Anchorage Adult Day Services, LLC, two companies in which Ms. Francisco held an ownership interest, were also sentenced for Medical Assistance Fraud. Good Faith Services, LLC, was ordered to pay a fine of $300,000 and restitution in the amount of $1.2 million. Anchorage Adult Day Services was ordered to pay a $20,000 fine.

http://law.alaska.gov/press/releases/2015/121115-MFCU-Francisco.html
CONNECTICUT
December 21, 2015

Attorney General George Jepsen Announces State Reaches False Claims Act Settlement with Southington Dental Provider

A Southington dentist will pay $55,000 to settle civil healthcare fraud allegations involving the filing of false and fraudulent claims for payments from Connecticut's Medicaid program, Attorney General George Jepsen said today.

The Attorney General alleged that, while enrolled as a dental provider in the Connecticut Medical Assistance Program (CMAP), Dr. Thomas DeRienzo – a licensed dentist practicing in the Plantsville section of Southington – engaged in a long-term scheme to submit claims to the state Department of Social Services (DSS) for dental services that were not provided to his CMAP patients. In particular, Dr. DeRienzo is alleged to have falsely charged DSS for resin-based composite fillings that, in fact, patients did not receive.

Dr. DeRienzo has agreed to pay $55,000 to resolve the False Claims Act allegations. In addition, he has agreed to enter into a separate agreement with the DSS to be permanently barred from participation as a dentist in the CMAP.


FLORIDA
January 29, 2016

Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Three Arrested For Billing Medicaid For More Than Half A Million Dollars For Services That Were Not Provided.

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit, with the assistance of the Maitland Police Department, the Sanford Police Department and the Sunrise Police Department, arrested three individuals for allegedly defrauding Medicaid out of more than half a million dollars. Two more defendants are being sought by authorities for arrest.

According to the investigation, Matthew, Micah and Jimmie Harrell, along with Kenneith Durden and Keith Daly, billed Medicaid for services not provided and fraudulently used a licensed mental health provider's information without that provider's knowledge or consent to become accepted
as a Medicaid provider. Matthew Harrell and Kenneith Durden allegedly set up parallel, fraudulent business operations in Florida, Georgia and Louisiana that all engaged in similar criminal activities. The businesses operated under the names Revive Athletics Florida, Divine Consulting Services and Durden Consulting Services of Florida. Keith Daly, an Amerigroup manager, allegedly helped to establish and run the fraudulent operations. Amerigroup, a Medicaid managed care contractor, cooperated with the investigation.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/C0F64BD9DF1DC33285257F490053C5B7

GEORGIA
January 22, 2016

Attorney General Sam Olens Announces Woman Pleads Guilty to Medicaid Fraud

On Tuesday, January 19, 2016, E'Terica Rucks was sentenced to two years in prison followed by eight years on probation after pleading guilty to Medicaid Fraud in DeKalb County Superior Court. As part of the sentence Rucks will have to pay restitution in the amount of $659,183.44 to the State.

Between July 19, 2010 and June 25, 2012, Rucks owned and operated Family Functions, LLC. Family Functions held itself out to the public as a behavioral health provider that served many Medicaid recipients in both the Atlanta area and at a satellite site in northern Georgia. An investigation by the Georgia Medicaid Fraud Control Unit revealed that Rucks’ business submitted numerous claims for payments that were fraudulent in nature.

**ILLINOIS**
January 11, 2016

**Attorney General Lisa Madigan Announces Chicago Woman Convicted Of Medicaid Fraud**

Attorney General Lisa Madigan today announced that a Chicago woman was sentenced to six years in the Illinois Department of Corrections for Medicaid fraud.

Debra Gaines, 55, of Chicago, was convicted of Theft of State Property, in this case Medicaid funds, and Vendor Fraud in July 2015 by Judge James Linn in Cook County Circuit Court. On January 4, 2016, the court sentenced her on class X Theft of State Property (Medicaid funds) in her scheme to collect Medicaid funds for mental health services that were falsely claimed to have been provided by a doctor. The other count of Vendor Fraud was merged with the count of Theft of State Property.


**LOUISIANA**
January 26, 2016

**Attorney General Jeff Landry Announces Medicaid Fraud Arrest**

Attorney General Jeff Landry announced today that Keisha Robinson has been arrested on charges involving schemes to defraud the state’s Medicaid program.

Robinson was charged with one count of identity theft, one count of computer fraud, and one count of criminal conspiracy to commit Medicaid fraud after downloading over 13,000 Medicaid Recipient’s information from Louisiana Healthcare Connections, a Louisiana Managed Care Organization.

[https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=2162&catID=5](https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=2162&catID=5)
**MASSACHUSETTS**
January 28, 2016

**Boston Dentist to Pay $650,000 to MassHealth Over Improper Medicaid Billing**

A Boston dentist has agreed to pay $650,000 to the state’s Medicaid program (MassHealth) to resolve allegations of improperly billing for dental work at her offices in Everett, South Boston, and Malden, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The settlement resolves allegations that from February 2007 through July 2012, Dr. Ekaterina Mamulashvili and her professional dental practices improperly and frequently used multiple oral examination codes to bill MassHealth for services received by the same patients on the same day.


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**MINNESOTA**
December 30, 2015

**Attorney General Charges Shakopee Prison Inmate with Second Massive Scheme to Defraud Medical Assistance Program**

A woman currently serving time in Shakopee Prison related to a 2010 conviction for Medical Assistance fraud has been charged by Attorney General Lori Swanson a second time for an elaborate scheme to bilk taxpayers by unlawfully submitting claims for home nursing care.

Swanson’s office filed criminal complaints in Ramsey County District Court against Barbara Ann Currin five of her family members, and one of her associates. The complaint against Currin alleges that she and her six accomplices created a network of eight home health care agencies to unlawfully bill Medical Assistance for home nursing care.

MISSISSIPPI
January 8, 2016

Attorney General Hood Announces Corinth Nurse Arrested for Medicaid Fraud Charges

Tami Bivens-Johnson, 55, of Corinth, is facing charges of Medicaid Fraud, announced Attorney General Jim Hood today.

Bivens-Johnson turned herself in today to the Alcorn County Sheriff’s Department following a recent indictment by an Alcorn County Grand Jury on three counts of Felonious Medicaid Fraud.

Bivens-Johnson, as a nurse practitioner in Corinth, did willfully, unlawfully and feloniously make, present and cause to be made and presented false, fictitious and fraudulent claims for more than $3,200 in Medicaid benefits, knowing the claims to be false, fictitious and fraudulent. In Count I, claims for some 57 Medicaid recipients presented for payment and billed as medical services which she represented had been provided in her clinic, are alleged to have been prescription refills done over the telephone. In Counts II and III, It is alleged that Bivens-Johnson filed claims representing that she had provided medical services in her clinic to Medicaid recipients, although she allegedly was in New York (Count II) and Florida (Count III) at the times.

http://www.ago.state.ms.us/releases/corinth-nurse-arrested-for-medicaid-fraud-charges/

MISSOURI
January 29, 2016

Attorney General Chris Koster Announces Guilty Pleas For Mother And Daughter Who Defrauded Medicaid

Attorney General Chris Koster announced today that a mother and daughter from the Kansas City area pleaded guilty in the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri to one count each for defrauding Medicaid.

The mother, Victoria K. Nunez, and her daughter, Lezley N. Nunez, 29, submitted false timesheets to a personal care company claiming that the daughter had provided consumer directed services to her mother. The
Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Division assisted the United States Attorney’s Office, Western District of Missouri, and the Offices of the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the investigation.


January 28, 2016

**Attorney General Chris Koster Announces Guilty Pleas in Dent County Medicaid Fraud Cases**

Attorney General Chris Koster announced today that three Salem residents have pleaded guilty to felony Medicaid fraud for billing Medicaid for personal care attendant services that were never provided, as the result of an Attorney General’s Office investigation.

Stace Pryor, 42, pleaded guilty to 3 felony counts of Medicaid fraud and was ordered to pay restitution of $3,553.47. His wife, Jodie Pryor, 34, pleaded guilty to three felony counts of Medicaid fraud and was ordered to pay restitution of $4,022.10. The Pryors each face a possible 120 days in jail, at the discretion of the probation officer, and were placed on supervised probation for five years. Jodie Pryor was ordered to perform 80 hours of community service work.

Charles Christmas, 32, pleaded guilty to four felony counts of Medicaid fraud and was ordered to pay restitution of $7,575.57 and to perform 80 hours of community service work. Christmas was also placed on supervised probation for five years.

NEBRASKA
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Doug Peterson Announces Nebraska Man Sentenced for Submitting False Claims to Medicaid

United States Attorney Deborah Gilg and Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson announced that Clements Akara, 61, of Omaha, Nebraska, was sentenced today by United States District Judge John M. Gerrard for the crime of health care fraud. Akara was sentenced to three years of supervised release, five months incarceration, and five months of house arrest. He was also ordered to perform 100 hours of community service and pay restitution to the Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services, Medicaid Division totaling $65,911.


January 8, 2016

Attorney General Doug Peterson Announces Beatrice Pharmacist Pleads Guilty to Medicaid Fraud

Attorney General Doug Peterson announced this morning that a Beatrice pharmacist has pled guilty to one count of Medicaid fraud in Gage County District Court. Tod Lundberg, 50, formerly owned and operated The Medicine Shoppe pharmacy in downtown Beatrice. The pharmacy has since closed. Lundberg entered his guilty plea on January 5.

Attorney General Doug Peterson Announces Nebraska Therapist Sentenced in Health Care Fraud Case

U.S. Attorney Deb Gilg and Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson announced that a Lincoln-area woman must repay more than $192,000 to the state of Nebraska and serve 12 weekends in jail over the next year after pleading guilty to committing health care fraud. Melissa Prentice-Erickson must also serve six months under house arrest and be on probation for 5 years, under a sentence handed down this afternoon by U.S. District Judge John Gerrard.


A.G. Schneiderman Announces Settlement of Over $1m with Albany Transportation Company for Overbilling Medicaid

New York’s Medicaid Program To Receive Over $1 Million From Advantage Transit Group, Inc.

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that the Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) reached an agreement with a Capital Region transportation company, Advantage Transit Group, Inc., for repayment of Medicaid funds totaling over one million dollars for Medicaid reimbursements that the company was not entitled to receive.

Advantage Transit Group provides, among other services, transportation for Medicaid recipients to and from appointments and submits claims for reimbursement to Medicaid. An audit-investigation of Advantage Transit Group’s Medicaid claims revealed thousands of dollars in overpayments to the company over several years. Specifically, the Settlement Agreement entered into between MFCU and the provider acknowledges that between January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2009 and January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014, Advantage Transit Group submitted claims for reimbursement to Medicaid for transportation services and received payment for services that
NEW YORK CONT’D

were not rendered. The provider fully cooperated in the audit-investigation and agreed to a total repayment to New York State Medicaid Program of $1,093,202.86.


A.G. Schneiderman Announces Sentencing Of Capital Region No-Show Personal Care Aide Who Bilked Medicaid

Aide Submitted False Records To CDPHP, Causing Over $1,000 In Theft To Medicaid

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the sentencing of personal care aide, Nicholas Gallup, 27 of Schenectady, for submitting false time sheets to Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP), causing over $1,000 in losses to Medicaid. The defendant submitted false claims for providing care to a Medicaid recipient that never occurred. Gallup was sentenced in Albany County Court by the Honorable Peter Lynch to 30 days in Albany County Jail and five years’ probation.

Gallup entered a plea of guilty on November 4, 2015 to one count Falsification of Business Records in the First Degree, a Class E felony in front of Albany County Court Judge Peter Lynch. In addition to the sentence, Gallup has paid $1,444.00 in restitution, was ordered to stay away from the Medicaid recipient, and to not participate in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program.

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Sentencing Of Rochester Nurse Who Defrauded Medicaid Of Over Eight Thousand Dollars

Schmeka Morgan Billed Medicaid For Hours She Never Worked Over A Four Month Period

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced the sentencing of Schmeka Morgan, a licensed practical nurse who stole $8,838 from the Medicaid program. Morgan, who provided private nursing services to a special needs young adult, was charged with billing for numerous hours that she did not work. Morgan pleaded guilty on November 2, 2015 to Petit Larceny, a class A misdemeanor. Morgan was sentenced yesterday by the Honorable Judge Karen Morris in Brighton Town Court to three years’ probation and restitution of $8,838 to the state.


A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea of Nurse Arrested for Defrauding State Medicaid System of Nearly $5k

Erica Viverette Billed For Numerous Hours Of Care She Did Not Provide To Special Needs Patients

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the arrest and guilty plea of Erica Viverette, a Rochester licensed practical nurse employed to provide private nursing services to a special needs young adult, for stealing nearly $5,000 from the Medicaid program by billing for numerous hours that she did not work.

The investigation, conducted by the New York State Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit (MFCU) and the Office of the Medicaid Fraud Inspector General (OMIG) revealed that Viverette, age 30, of Rochester, repeatedly billed the Medicaid program for work she never performed. Hired to provide nursing services to a four medically fragile persons, Viverette billed
NEW YORK CONT’D

for numerous hours of care that she did not provide to those individuals, thereby accruing $4,910.57 in false billings.


December 7, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Guilty Plea of Two Capital Region No-Show Personal Care Aides Who Bilked Medicaid

Aides Submitted False Records To CDPHP, Each Causing Over $1,000 In Theft To Medicaid

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the guilty pleas of two personal care aides, Robert Lee Van Horne, 33, of Schenectady, and Nicholas Gallup, 27 of Schenectady, for submitting false time sheets to Capital District Physicians Health Plan (CDPHP), causing over $1,000 in each in theft to Medicaid. The defendants submitted false claims for providing care to a Medicaid recipient that never occurred.

Gallup entered a plea of guilty to one count Falsification of Business Records in the First Degree, a Class E felony in front of the Honorable Peter Lynch in Albany County Court. Under the terms of his guilty plea, he will be sentenced to a period of incarceration in the Albany County Jail and five years probation. Van Horne entered a plea of guilty to one count Falsification of Business Records in the Second Degree, a Class A misdemeanor and one count of Petit Larceny, also a Class A misdemeanor, also in front of Judge Lynch, and will be sentenced to one and a half years in the Albany County Jail. Both defendants agreed to pay restitution, to stay away from the Medicaid recipient, and to not participate in the Consumer Directed Personal Assistance Program.

December 4, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Arrests Of Two Queens Residents For Allegedly Defrauding New York State Of More Than $3 Million Dollars**

Shahzad Nawaz, The Owner Of Vital Pharmacies Inc., Is Charged With Submitting False Claims To Medicaid And The AIDS Drug Assistance Program For Dispensing Diverted HIV Medication to Patients And For Billing Medicaid For Medication That Was Never Actually Dispensed To Patients

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman announced the arrests and indictments yesterday of Shahzad Nawaz a/k/a “Prince Malik,” 44, of Bayside, his business Vital Pharmacies Inc. d/b/a “Vital Drugs,” and the company’s General Manager Irfan Nawaz, 36, of Franklin Square for allegedly stealing more than $3 million from the state Medicaid program and the AIDS Drugs Assistance Program (ADAP). Also indicted were Michael F. Bobadilla, 34, of Bayside, and shell companies, Empire State Surgical and Wholesale Inc. and Exclusive Health and Beauty Wholesale Inc., alleged fictional companies that the defendants used to launder their criminal proceeds.

OHIO
January 12, 2016

Attorney General DeWine Seeks Consumer Restitution from Two Home Improvement Contractors

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today announced lawsuits against a southwest Ohio home improvement contractor and a central Ohio home improvement contractor for failing to deliver promised services to consumers and performing shoddy work.

In separate lawsuits, the Attorney General accuses Columbia Exteriors LLC, of Cincinnati, and Big Ten Construction LLC, of Columbus, of violating Ohio’s consumer protection laws.


VERMONT
January 7, 2016

Attorney General Sorrell Announces Rutland Man Convicted For Falsely Obtaining Monies From The Vermont Medicaid Program

Hal Curtis, age 64, of Rutland, Vermont, was convicted on January 5, 2016, in Vermont Superior Court, Windsor Criminal Division, on six misdemeanor counts of False Pretenses. The convictions stemmed from Mr. Curtis’ submission of false timesheets in order to obtain payment for services that were not provided to a recipient of benefits under the Developmental Services waiver program, a Vermont Medicaid program. Specifically, the State alleged that Mr. Curtis filed timesheets purporting to show that he had delivered community support services in the middle of the night and small hours of the morning while the recipient of benefits was sleeping.

### CONSUMER ADVOCACY

**ALABAMA**  
December 16, 2015

**Attorney General Luther Strange Issues Citizen Alert – Telephone Scams To Watch Out For Now!**

Luther Strange, Alabama’s Attorney General, and Joseph Borg, Director of the Alabama Securities Commission (ASC), warn Alabama citizens to be wary of recurring telephone scams!

A rash of telephone scams, both old and new, have people posing as representatives of state and federal agencies to intimidate Alabamians into sending money or providing private information to bogus criminal callers. The Office of the Attorney General and the Alabama Securities Commission are teaming up to help protect Alabamians from falling for such phone call scams.

[http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-750](http://www.ago.state.al.us/News-750)

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**ARIZONA**  
January 8, 2016

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich Issues Consumer Alert on Ticket Scams Ahead of Arizona Cardinals Playoff Game & College Football Championship Game**

Attorney General Mark Brnovich today issued a consumer alert to help football fans avoid ticket scams before the College Football Playoff National Championship Game on Monday, January 11, 2016 and the Arizona Cardinals NFL Playoff Game on Saturday, January 16, 2016. With such a high demand for tickets, these high profile football games are prime targets for scammers trying to sell counterfeit tickets.

CALIFORNIA
January 28, 2016

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Issues Consumer Alert on Sports Ticket Scams Targeting Super Bowl Fans

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today issued a consumer alert to Californians regarding potential sports ticket scams targeting consumers attending the Super Bowl and related events. As part of her commitment to modernizing government as well as better serving the visually impaired, Attorney General Harris has also released the first in a series of radio stories on consumer issues across the state. This feature includes a fan’s perspective plus information and tips from the California Department of Justice, StubHub, Fan Freedom, and the Better Business Bureau, to avoid becoming the victim of a ticket scam.


January 28, 2016

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Commemorates Data Privacy Day by Issuing Identity Theft Protection Tips

California Attorney General Kamala D. Harris is commemorating international Data Privacy Day by reminding consumers of three easy steps to take to protect against identity theft in 2016. Attorney General Harris is also partnering with Facebook to share privacy tips for Facebook users, as part of her commitment to incorporating technology into government. The Attorney General’s Facebook video message can be found here: http://on.fb.me/dataprivacydaycalifornia. January 28, Data Privacy Day, is observed in the U.S., Canada and Europe as an opportunity to promote privacy awareness.

Identity theft is a privacy crime that cost individuals and businesses $16 billion in 2014, the last year for which information is available.[1] There were 12.7 million victims of identity theft in the U.S. – that is one victim every 2.5 seconds. Over 1.5 million victims were in California.

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, Univision Los Angeles, SEIU CA to Hold Statewide Public Forums on How to Avoid Immigration Services Scams and Apply for Citizenship

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today announced the kick off of a series of statewide public forums in partnership with Univision Los Angeles, the Service Employees International Union of California and iAmerica to provide Californians applying for U.S. Citizenship with information on the application process and how to avoid immigration services fraud.

The forums are a continued effort by the Attorney General’s Civil Rights Enforcement Section (CRES), which last year hosted and presented at forums across the state to warn immigrant communities of scams targeting immigrants and con artists perpetrating immigration services fraud. At the forums, CRES will also educate attendees about wage theft, a crime that is often targeted at immigrant populations.


Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Urges Californians to Be on the Lookout For the ‘Grandparent Scam’ and Other Recently Reported Scams

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today issued a consumer alert urging older Californians to be on the lookout for the “Grandparent Scam” and other scams targeting seniors and others that have been reported to the California Department of Justice. During the holidays, older Californians are especially vulnerable to scams perpetrated by individuals who prey on their good will.

Earlier this month, Attorney General Harris and AARP California hosted a telephone town hall with thousands of older Californians to discuss the ‘Grandparent Scam’ and other common scams. According to estimates from the AARP, fraud costs American seniors billions of dollars a year.
Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Announces $25.95 Million Settlement with Comcast Over Hazardous Waste Disposal And Privacy Violations

December 15, 2015

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris and Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O’Malley today announced a settlement with Comcast Cable Communications LLC (“Comcast”) to resolve allegations that Comcast both unlawfully disposed of hazardous waste and discarded records without first omitting or redacting private customer information. As part of the settlement, Comcast will pay a total of $25.95 million.

COLORADO

January 29, 2016

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Warns Broncos Fans of Super Bowl Ticket Scams

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman is alerting Broncos fans to be cautious before purchasing Super Bowl tickets from unproven or unlicensed sellers. With average ticket prices hovering near $6,000, it is more important than ever that fans be cautious before purchasing tickets from Internet or Craigslist sellers.

There are already dozens of websites offering tickets and accommodations for the February 7th game. Many claim to have “discounted” tickets or make other questionable claims. Do your homework before buying tickets or packing your bags.
COLORADO CONT’D

January 7, 2016

Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman Warns Immigrants About Persons Illegally Selling Driver’s License Appointments

Colorado Attorney General Cynthia H. Coffman revealed today that her office, in cooperation with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) at the Colorado Department of Revenue, is investigating whether persons obtaining – and then selling – DMV appointments under the Colorado Road and Community Safety Act (CO-RCSA) are violating Colorado law.

Currently, this CO-RCSA program allows for immigrants, notwithstanding their legal status, that live and pay taxes in Colorado to obtain a state driver’s license or Colorado ID. The IDs can only be obtained at one of three DMV locations. Applicants must make an appointment in advance through the DMV’s on-line scheduler and then appear at one of these locations. The DMV does not charge for making these appointments.


DELAWARE

December 30, 2015

Attorney General Matt Denn, Community Leaders, Issue Renewed Call For Use Of Bank Settlement Funds To Address Issues In Delaware’s Hardest Hit Neighborhoods

Backed by community leaders and advocates for economically hard hit communities, Attorney General Matt Denn has renewed and revised his proposal to utilize funds from financial crisis settlement to be used for crime prevention, housing, substance abuse treatment, after school and summer school programs, prisoner reentry and education in those areas.

The proposal is a renewal of the Attorney General’s “Lifting Up Delaware’s Communities” program, announced in January 2015, for using settlement funds that Delaware had received from Bank of America and Citigroup to resolve allegations of market misconduct by financial institutions that contributed to the national financial crash.
The amount of funds now available is approximately $29 million, rather than
the original $36 million available a year ago. $5 million was used by the
General Assembly in June 2015 to balance the state budget, and another $2
million was set aside in December by agreement between the legislature’s
Joint Finance Committee and the Department of Justice to expand policing in
high-crime areas of Dover and Wilmington. JFC is expected to deliberate over
additional uses of the funds in January.

http://news.delaware.gov/2015/12/30/ag-denn-community-leaders-issue-
renewed-call-for-use-of-bank-settlement-funds-to-address-issues-in-
delawares-hardest-hit-neighborhoods/

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**ILLINOIS**

January 5, 2016

**Attorney General Lisa Madigan Warns Homeowners To Be On Alert For
Flood-Related Home Repair Scams**

Following severe flooding in areas of downstate and southern Illinois, Attorney
General Lisa Madigan today warned residents in impacted areas to be on alert
for home repair con artists looking to exploit homeowners and local
businesses that need repairs due to flood-related damage.

Madigan cautioned Illinois residents that scammers may quickly move into
communities hit hard by flooding to take advantage of people with damage to
their homes or businesses. Madigan noted that these "storm chasers" use the
opportunity to pressure people into making quick, and often expensive,
decisions about cleanup and construction work.

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2016_01/20160105.html
Attorney General Beshear Warns Consumers of ‘Federal Warrant’ Scam

Calls from a ‘Sergeant Joe Crews’ say consumers have a federal warrant against them

Kentuckians are being targeted over the phone by scam artists claiming to be a “Sergeant Joe Crews” who can help them resolve a federal warrant that has been issued against them.

Attorney General Andy Beshear is warning consumers not to fall for this scam, the latest in a series of scams that his Office of Consumer Protection is tracking across Kentucky.

http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=15

Attorney General Beshear Warns of Scheme to Double-cross Financial Fraud Victims

Third-party asset recovery companies targeting unsuspecting victims

Victims of financial fraud are being targeted by scammers who claim they can help recover lost investments and provide legal assistance.

Kentuckians who may have already lost money and perhaps even their life’s savings to fraudulent investment schemes are being targeted through email and phone calls. The call or email claims to be from an “asset recovery company” that promises to help victims recover their losses for an upfront fee.

http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=12
Kentucky Cont’d

January 11, 2016

Attorney General Beshear Warns of Publishers Clearing House Scam

*Sweepstakes imposters calling Kentuckians asking for money*

Winners of the Publishers Clearing House Sweepstakes do not receive phone calls about their prizes.

And Attorney General Andy Beshear wants to stress this fact as a safeguard to Kentucky seniors and consumers who are being inundated by imposters attempting to scam them out of their money.

As Attorney General, Beshear is committed to protecting Kentucky families and seniors, and this commitment includes notifying consumers to prevent Kentuckians from falling for the scams in the first place.

The Attorney General’s Office of Consumer Protection has received numerous calls the last week from Kentucky consumers across the Commonwealth asking about the validity of the phone calls. Consumers have reported these calls are from Jamaica (876 area code), as well as other phone numbers with area codes within various states.

http://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=AttorneyGeneral&prId=7

Maine

December 4, 2015

Attorney General Janet Mills Issues Alert Reminder: Calls Purporting To Be From The IRS Demanding A Payment Are A Scam

The Maine Attorney General’s Office has noticed a recent increase in the number of Mainers calling to report they are the target of phone scams in which someone pretends to be calling to collect a debt owed to the Internal Revenue Service. Maine Attorney General Janet T. Mills is reminding people to be aware that these are scams and they should not give people credit card information or wire money.

Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Expansion of Abandoned Housing Initiative

Highlights Growth of Program as Next Phase of Addressing Impact of Foreclosure Crisis

Attorney General Maura Healey today announced the expansion of her Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI), which helps cities and towns to address the lasting impacts of the foreclosure crisis by rehabilitating abandoned properties to reduce blight and crime, enhance public safety, increase property values, and overall improve neighborhoods and communities.

Recently, AG Healey’s Office has seen an increase in the number of cities and towns seeking assistance to reduce blight and revitalize their neighborhoods through the rehabilitation of distressed and abandoned properties.


Attorney General Maura Healey Warns of Bankruptcy Transfer Scam

Bankruptcy Filers are Reportedly Being Targeted to Wire Money to Satisfy Debts

Amid nationwide reports of fraud, Attorney General Maura Healey is warning consumers of a scam targeting those in bankruptcy in an effort to steal their money.

Consumers who have filed for bankruptcy or have begun the process of filing for bankruptcy are being targeted by a scam that requests the immediate wire transfer of money to satisfy their debts.

The scheme is typically perpetrated by individuals posing as the consumer’s attorney. Using a technique called “spoofing,” which is increasingly being used in phone scams, the scammers are able to make their phone number
appear to be that of the consumer’s actual attorney on caller ID. The scammers contact the consumer with instructions to immediately send a wire transfer that will satisfy their debts outside of the bankruptcy proceedings. During the call, the scammers may use personal information to make the scheme sound more authentic.


MICHIGAN
January 13, 2016

**Lose Weight, Not Money: Schuette Says to Shop Smart for Gym Memberships**

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today reminds Michigan residents, who may be adopting a healthier lifestyle in the New Year, of a consumer alert that offers advice on how to make educated choices about health club and fitness center memberships.

In 2015, the Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division received 65 complaints from Michigan consumers against health clubs and fitness centers. The majority of the complaints involved discrepancies between what consumers say they were told by sales personnel and what the signed contract actually guaranteed. In particular, consumers reported the written cancellation procedure frequently differed from what they were told by the salesperson. Consumers also complained about high-pressure sales tactics and feeling rushed to sign contracts.

http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849_47203-373330--,00.html
MISSISSIPPI
December 16, 2015

Attorney General Hood Warns Mississippi Residents of U.S. Office of Personnel Management Data Breach

The Attorney General’s Office Consumer Protection Division has recently received numerous calls regarding a recent data breach reported by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) potentially affecting more than 21 million people nationwide whose personal information was stolen in a cyber-breach of government security-clearance files, announced Attorney General Jim Hood today.

The breach of personnel files involved personal and career information on 4.2 million current and former federal employees. The security-clearance breach involved 21.5 million people who applied for security clearances or had them renewed since about 2000, and in some cases before. Of that larger group, about 3.6 million are current or former federal employees. Most of the rest are current or former military or contractor personnel. About 1.8 million were not applicants but were identified in another person’s application. Beyond basic identifying information, the breach included highly personal information on applicants, such as past financial or legal troubles, as well as the fingerprints of about 5.6 million people.

MISSISSIPPI CONT’D

December 10, 2015

Attorney General Jim Hood And The Mississippi Department Of Public Safety Issues Scam Alert

Scammers Impersonate Personnel from the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security

Attorney General Jim Hood and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety (MDPS) are warning Mississippi consumers of an email scam in which the scammers pose as personnel from the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (OHS) to illicitly collect money.

Mississippi residents reported receiving email notices from accounts that appear to be sent from personnel of the OHS. However, the email was not sent by OHS personnel, and it is a fraudulent attempt to trick consumers into sending money.

The fraudulent email states, “This is to informed you that we have today received the letter Indemnity and fund transfer certificate and other documents from the Nigeria Embassy here in Washington, DC as directed, so bear in mind that we are very satisfy with the documents and in that regard you are to pay for the Homeland Security fund Transfer clearance fee of US$1,250 before we will instructed the crediting of your fund into your bank account.”


MISSOURI

January 14, 2016

Attorney General Chris Koster Warns Consumers About Tax ID Theft Scams As The 2016 Filing Season Begins

Attorney General Chris Koster warns consumers to be alert for tax fraud identity theft as the 2015 tax filing season begins.

Tax identity theft occurs when an identity thief uses a taxpayer’s stolen identity to file a fraudulent return and claim the victim’s tax refund. The identity thief often uses a stolen Social Security number and other consumer
information to file a forged return. In other scams, some tax thieves use children’s identities to fraudulently claim them as dependents on a return. In yet another version, scammers will hack into an online tax preparation software account opened by the victim.


December 29, 2015

Attorney General Chris Koster Warns Consumers To Beware Of Scams And Price Gouging In Floods’ Wake

Attorney General Chris Koster warned consumers to be on the lookout for price gouging and other storm-chasing scams after heavy rains and flooding occurred throughout Missouri.

Storm chasers typically go door-to-door and use high-pressure sales tactics when offering repair or cleanup services. The scammers may arrive from out-of-state and be unable to show local references or prove they are locally bonded or licensed. They may claim to specialize in services like flood repairs or restoration and attempt to convince consumers to sign a contract that lets the scammers negotiate directly with the homeowner’s insurance company. Storm chasers often take payments up front, provide shoddy or no work, then flee the region.


NEBRASKA

December 21, 2015

Attorney General Doug Peterson Issues Consumer Alert: Compliance Violation Postcard – Businesses Beware

Attorney General Doug Peterson is issuing an alert for Nebraskans to be wary of a postcard being sent to Nebraska companies. Several businesses have reported receiving the official-looking postcard purporting to be from “United Business Services Compliance Division” providing a “Notice of Potential
Compliance Violation” and listing a phone number to call immediately to avoid fees and penalties.

This is a scam. The mailing appears to be an official government document, but it is not. Currently, there is not an entity registered to do business in Nebraska by the name of “United Business Services.” The address used by this questionable entity is that of a downtown apartment complex. We believe the scammers are preying on newly registered limited liability companies, who may not know what rules they actually need to follow.


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**NEVADA**

December 29, 2015

**Attorney General Laxalt Warns Consumers Of Phone Scam**

*Callers Pose as Attorney General Representatives*

Today, Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt warns consumers to be aware of a new scam making rounds where callers pose as representatives of the “state” attorney general or U.S. Department of Treasury. Similar to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) fraudulent calls, scammers threaten arrest or suit in an attempt to collect person information and money from their victims.


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**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

January 29, 2016

**Attorney General Joseph A. Foster Issues Consumer Alert – IRS Related Scams on The Rise**

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster warns New Hampshire residents that with federal income tax season upon us, IRS related scams are on the increase. Frequently, residents will receive unsolicited calls from individuals fraudulently claiming to be from the IRS demanding payment for taxes allegedly past due. The callers typically ask for some sort of immediate
payment and request debit or credit card numbers. Some callers even threaten arrest, wage garnishment or other forms of legal process to coerce the resident into making the payment.

The IRS cautions taxpayers that their first contact will not be a phone call but will almost always be in the form of a letter from the IRS sent through the mail. The IRS also does not initiate contact with taxpayers by email to request personal or financial information and it never asks for credit card, debit card or prepaid card information over the phone.


**NEW JERSEY**

January 22, 2016

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Issues Alert: In the Extreme Weather State of Emergency, Be Aware of Price Gouging and Your Rights as Consumers**

The Office of the Attorney General, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, and the New Jersey Division of Criminal Justice are reminding consumers about New Jersey’s price gouging law as the state faces its first major snowstorm of the year. Merchants and businesses that engage in price gouging in the State of Emergency relating to the storm will be punished to the full extent of the law by both criminal and civil authorities.

http://www.nj.gov/oag/newsreleases16/pr20160122b.html

December 31, 2015

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Alerted Consumers That “Hoverboards,” One Of This Past Season’s Hottest Gift Items, Is Being Investigated By The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (“CPSC”) For Possible Fire Hazards.**

The CPSC launched its investigation amid nationwide reports that the self-balancing, wheeled scooters have exploded or burst into flames while in use or during the battery charging process. Two of those reported fires occurred in New Jersey.
NEW JERSEY CONT’D

In a statement on the agency website, CPSC announced it is “moving quickly” to address the growing public concern regarding hoverboard safety. Agency staff is working “non-stop” to find the root cause of the fire hazard, assess how much risk it might present, and provide consumers with answers as soon as possible.

http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20151231a.html

December 2, 2015


The Office of the Attorney General and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs today alerted consumers that VTech Holdings Ltd. (“VTech”), a manufacturer of electronic learning products and baby monitors (www.vtechkids.com), announced that on November 14, 2015, an unauthorized party accessed VTech customer data housed on its Learning Lodge app store database. The breached customer database contains general user profile information including name, email address, encrypted password, secret question and answer for password retrieval, IP address, mailing address, and download history.

http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20151202a.html

NEW MEXICO

January 25, 2016

Attorney General Hector Balderas Issues SCAM ALERT: Warns New Mexicans of Craigslist Apartment Rental Scams

Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a Scam Alert today in response to a recent uptick in reports of Craigslist apartment scams from consumers across New Mexico. This scam typically occurs when someone is looking for an apartment or house to rent on
Craigslist. The “landlord” will not be available to show the property personally as they claim to be out of town, but they promise a great deal on the rent. Typically, the person posting the photo and ad does not own the property. The scammer will request deposit money to be sent to another state or country. Once that money is gone, it’s gone for good.


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NEW YORK
January 27, 2016

A.G. Schneiderman Releases Consumer Alert on Common Phone Scams Following Recent Uptick in Local Consumer Complaints

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today issued a consumer alert following a recent uptick in local reports of telephone scammers posing as officials from the Internal Revenue Service. These scams, identified by complaints and other evidence collected by the Attorney General’s Office, often target seniors, students, and first-generation Americans.

In this particular scam, the caller often claims to be an agent or police officer from the Internal Revenue Service or Attorney General’s Office calling about a past due tax balance that is owed. The caller will tell the victim that unless the debt is paid immediately, a team of officers will come to the victim’s home that day to arrest the victim. The scammer will also request that the “IRS Tax Warrant” be paid with a Green Dot Card Money Card or Western Union MoneyGram. These scammers often use caller ID spoofing so that the victim’s caller ID box says “Internal Revenue Service” or displays the phone number of the Internal Revenue Service. Sometimes scammers will also ask victims for personal information such as a Social Security number in order to commit identity theft.

NEW YORK CONT’D

December 22, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Additional $3.7m Settlement To Provide Financial Relief For Rome Finance Company Victims

Over 3,000 Consumers Nationwide To Receive Partial Victim Compensation Exceeding $3.7 Million

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that, in the final chapter of Rome Finance Company, Inc. and its related entities, the federal Consumer Financial Protection Bureau announced that over 3,000 victims were issued partial compensation from a victim fund. The total amount of compensation paid exceeded $3.7 million dollars. Eligibility for these funds stemmed from a global settlement led by Attorney General Schneiderman and the CFPB along with several other states. Eighty-two victims in New York State will receive compensation from these funds.


December 7, 2015

AG Schneiderman Announces Innovative Partnership with Leading Statewide Media Associations to Protect New Yorkers from Foreclosure Rescue Scams

Voluntary Joint Initiative Aims To Keep Unlawful Advertisements For Mortgage Rescue Scams Out Of Local Media Outlets

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, New York News Publishers Association, New York Press Association and the New York State Broadcasters Association today announced a joint initiative to crack down on rampant and unlawful advertising of foreclosure rescue scams. Scammers target vulnerable homeowners who are typically in midst of the foreclosure process and are seeking help with mortgage modifications. In recent years there has been a rise in the number of scammers targeting New Yorkers, including an uptick in Deed Theft cases, in which scammers convince homeowners to sign away ownership rights on their homes.
The initiative will help media outlets scrutinize advertisements to identify possible scammers, who often use trusted local outlets as a vehicle to target vulnerable New Yorkers. Dozens of community media outlets are being asked to participate in the voluntary initiative. Copies of the letters sent to media outlets can be found here, here and here.


NORTH CAROLINA
January 29, 2016

Don’t fall for Super Bowl ticket scams, AG Cooper warns Panthers fans

Avoid ticket deals that sound too good to be true, check ticket details

North Carolinians seeking tickets to watch the Carolina Panthers play in Super Bowl 50 should look out for scams such as tickets offered at prices too good to be true, Attorney General Roy Cooper warned today.

Consumers should be skeptical of any Super Bowl 50 deal that advertises tickets for low prices. Face value for a single ticket to Super Bowl 50 ranges from $500 and $1,600, but average resale values are reportedly near $5,500 per ticket on popular online ticket vendors like StubHub and TicketsNow.


January 28, 2016

Protect Personal Information, AG Cooper Urges On Data Privacy Day

Businesses, government and consumers should follow data privacy measures, AG says

On Data Privacy Day, Attorney General Roy Cooper urged North Carolina consumers, businesses and government agencies to prioritize privacy and protect personal information.
“With so many more opportunities for us to share information, data privacy is more important than ever,” Cooper said. “Consumers should take proactive steps to guard their information and keep it from falling into the hands of criminals and scammers.”


December 29, 2015

**Freeze Kids’ Credit To Guard Against ID Theft, AG Cooper Urges NC Parents**

*Starting January 1, parents will be able to use security freezes to protect children’s credit*

Parents will soon have a new tool to help protect their children’s credit from fraud Attorney General Roy Cooper said today.

North Carolina House Bill 607 takes effect January 1 and gives parents and guardians the ability to freeze the credit reports of all children under age 16.

In the past, the major credit bureaus have said that they could not freeze credit reports for minors who had not yet established any credit. The new law requires credit bureaus to create and freeze a child’s credit report upon request of a parent or guardian.


**NORTH DAKOTA**

December 23, 2015

**Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem Announces North Dakota Residents Being Inundated With Threatening Messages From Scam Artists**

Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem warns North Dakotans that once again, scam artists are making calls pretending to be from the IRS. As the end of the
year approaches, people are making tax preparations and the con artists are taking advantage of the situation. Stenehjem has issued numerous warnings about IRS scam calls, which have been circulating in North Dakota for at least three years.

In the latest variation, the scam artists claim that the taxpayer has ignored previous messages and is now about to be charged with fraud. The scam artist demands that the taxpayer return the call immediately to avoid further legal action or imminent arrest, and leaves a call back number. Although the call back number appears to be in the United States, the scam artists use readily available technology to relay the calls to their actual location, outside the country. Unfortunately, this puts the scam artists beyond the reach of state and federal authorities.


OHIO
January 28, 2016

Attorney General DeWine Offers Five Ways to Protect Your Identity on Data Privacy Day

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today outlined tips to help Ohioans protect their personal information on Data Privacy Day, recognized annually on January 28.

In 2015, the Ohio Attorney General’s Office received more than 1,670 identity theft complaints, an increase of more than 300 from the previous year. It also helped victims clear more than $658,000 in fraudulent charges, according to complaint information.


January 8, 2016

Attorney General DeWine Warns Consumers to Avoid Lottery Scams as Jackpot Rises

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today warned consumers to avoid lottery and sweepstakes scams as the estimated Powerball jackpot hits $800 million.
In the past month, the Ohio Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Section has received more than two dozen complaints involving sweepstakes or prize scams. The average reported loss is about $5,000.

The scams often begin with a phone call or a letter claiming the consumer has won a few million dollars through a lottery or sweepstakes. In order to collect the winnings, consumers are told to wire a few hundred or a few thousand dollars to cover fees or taxes. In reality, they haven't won a prize, and any money they send will be lost.


December 18, 2015

**Attorney General Mike DeWine: Beware of Con Artists Posing as Puppy Breeders Online**

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today warned that some animal breeders and sellers who advertise online are con artists.

In 2015, the Ohio Attorney General’s Office received about 30 complaints from consumers who said they bought a puppy or other pet online but never received anything in return. The average reported loss was approximately $1,200.

In a typical puppy scam, a consumer finds an ad for a puppy online. The consumer communicates with the seller, agrees to buy the puppy, and eventually wires a few hundred dollars to have the puppy delivered. After paying, however, the consumer never receives the puppy. Instead, the seller demands more money for insurance or transportation costs and threatens to turn in the consumer for animal abuse if the consumer refuses to pay.


December 1, 2015

**Attorney General Mike DeWine Issues Warning, Ohioans Report Spike in “IRS” Imposter Scams**

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today warned that his office has seen an increase in reports of the IRS imposter scam, in which con artists tell consumers they are in trouble with the IRS.

Between Nov. 18 and Nov. 25, the Ohio Attorney General’s Help Center
received more than 600 reports of the scam, about three times as many as the previous week.

Most consumers who report the IRS scam to the Ohio Attorney General’s Office do not lose money, but nationally, nearly 4,550 victims collectively have paid over $23 million as a result of the scam since October 2013, according to the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.


December 1, 2015

**Attorney General DeWine Warns Consumers and Businesses to Avoid Charity Scams**

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine today offered good giving tips and introduced a new charity guide for businesses to help Ohioans avoid charity scams this holiday season.

The recommendations coincide with “Giving Tuesday” (the Tuesday after Thanksgiving), an initiative that promotes charitable giving.

To help businesses detect charitable fraud, Attorney General DeWine’s office has produced a new free publication called “**A Charity Guide for Businesses.**” The guide addresses raffles, collection bins, point-of-sale solicitations, and other issues that may arise when businesses interact with charities. It also offers a sample application that businesses can use to help evaluate solicitors who want to fundraise on the business’s premises.

OKLAHOMA
December 15, 2015

Attorney General Scott Pruitt Warns Oklahomans of Rampant IRS Phone Scam

Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt is warning to keep watch of a phone scam making its way across the state. The Attorney General’s Office has received a number of complaints from citizens who received phone calls from someone claiming to be a representative of the IRS.

The callers use various scare tactics to deceive individuals into providing personal information, or threatening arrest. The scam targets the most vulnerable Oklahomans who may not readily be aware of the IRS’s procedures.

https://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=17260

SOUTH DAKOTA
December 31, 2015

Attorney General Jackley Warns Consumers of Email Hacking Scam

Attorney General Marty Jackley is warning consumers of an email hacking scam that targets personal email accounts in an attempt to obtain personal identifying information or money.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division has received complaints from individuals in South Dakota who confirm their personal email accounts have been hijacked by scammers. In one incident, the hacker sent communications via the victim’s personal email account to the victim’s bank in an attempt to transfer money. The email was sent to a specific individual at the victim’s bank requesting a money wire and confirmation.

December 02, 2015

**Attorney General Jackley Warns of Windows Technical Support Scam Targeting South Dakotans**

Attorney General Marty Jackley is warning South Dakota consumers about a scam that continues to resurface in South Dakota that targets computer users. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection Division has received multiple reports of consumers receiving phone calls from someone claiming to be from the support center of Microsoft Windows wanting to gain access to the consumer’s computer in order to make repairs.

The call begins with the scammer telling the consumer that their computer has an urgent problem or virus that must be fixed immediately. The caller says “Microsoft” can connect to the computer remotely and repair it for the customer. Once the scammer is connected to the computer, they either obtain the consumer’s financial information through a fraudulent “pay” website or install malicious software that combs the computer for personal information, such as usernames, passwords, bank and credit card numbers, tax documents and more.


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**TEXAS**

December 28, 2015

**Attorney General Paxton Warns Texans of Scams in Wake of Tornadoes**

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton today cautions Texans to be aware of disaster scams in the wake of a disaster declaration in four North Texas counties. Severe weather and tornadoes caused devastation on some Texas communities on December 26, 2015, prompting Gov. Greg Abbott to issue a disaster declaration for the counties of Dallas, Collin Rockwall and Ellis.

VERMONT
December 8, 2015

Attorney General Sorrell and State Advises Solar Companies About Deceptive Advertising

The Vermont Attorney General’s Office and Department of Public Service provided official guidance to solar companies doing business in Vermont to avoid making deceptive claims for certain solar projects. “The recent proliferation of new solar projects also brings the potential for a new kind of deception,” said Attorney General Sorrell. In certain solar project agreements, including most community solar or net metering credit purchase arrangements, the solar company owns the solar panels, instead of the consumer. Within some of these projects, the solar company also sells the renewable energy certificates/credits (“RECs”) attributed to the electricity generated by those solar panels in a regional market in order to help finance the project. In such cases, the energy used by the consumer is not, legally speaking, renewable or solar energy (it is simply undifferentiated power or “null electricity”). Therefore, solar companies may not state or imply that the energy consumed from such projects is “solar,” “renewable,” or “clean,” and solar companies should have clear disclosures about the RECs.


December 3, 2015

Attorney General Sorrell Warns Donors to Be Aware That Paid Fundraisers Reap Largest Benefit From Many Charitable Donations

Vermonters donate millions of dollars to charitable causes each year, aiding members of their local community and supporting causes with nation-wide impact. All donated dollars, however, are not equal. When solicitations are made through a paid fundraiser – an entity hired by a charity to solicit contributions – many Vermonters are unaware of how much of their donation may go to the paid fundraiser rather than to the charity itself.

Today, the Attorney General’s Office has released a report on its website analyzing fundraising data for the past three fiscal years, July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2015, and outlining enforcement actions completed during that time. According to data on over 1100 campaigns run in Vermont,

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Vermonters gave close to $8 million to charitable causes through paid fundraisers. Of this total, however, 70%, or more than $5.4 million, stayed with the paid fundraisers. The charities, meanwhile, received less than a third of the total donations.


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**VIRGINIA**

January 27, 2016

**Attorney General Mark R. Herring Launches Effort To Combat Patent Trolls In Virginia**

*Attorney General's Patent Troll Unit will help protect Virginia businesses from bad faith claims of patent infringement that can cost millions to resolve*

Attorney General Mark R. Herring today announced a new emphasis on supporting Virginia businesses by combating patent trolling in Virginia through the Commonwealth's first-ever Attorney General's Patent Troll Unit. Patent trolling, or "bad faith" claims of patent infringement, forces high-tech and Main Street businesses to choose between paying unjustified licensing fees and engaging in costly litigation. Under bipartisan compromise legislation that Attorney General Herring's team helped broker, the Attorney General's Office is now empowered to investigate cases of patent trolling and seek financial penalties and injunctions against those who assert patent infringement claims in "bad faith," even if those persons or businesses are based outside of Virginia.

WEST VIRGINIA
January 4, 2016

Attorney General Morrisey Warns Consumers of a Payday Loan Scam

Attorney General Morrisey today warns consumers about a scam in which callers attempt to recover a payday loan, which they claim the consumer took out several years prior.

The callers allege they are from Stark Recovery and, in many cases, have the targeted consumer’s personal information such as name, phone number, address, date of birth and Social Security number.


December 30, 2015

Attorney General Morrisey Warns Consumers of Weight Loss Scam

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey today warned consumers to be aware of a weight loss scam as many West Virginians make New Year’s resolutions to lose those extra pounds.

Morrisey specifically warns West Virginia consumers of a scam that charges additional money following the purchase of a weight loss product’s trial offer. It could involve up to $87.95 being charged weeks after the consumer’s initial purchase of a $4.95 trial offer.


December 25, 2015

Attorney General Morrisey Alerts West Virginians about False Jury Duty Scam

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey warns citizens about a telephone scam in which a person receives a call alleging there is a warrant out for his or her arrest, but the charges will be dismissed if the person pays a fine over the phone.
The state Supreme Court of Appeals recently received word of someone posing to represent the Nicholas County Sheriff's Office. The scammer informs citizens they have outstanding arrest warrants alleging they failed to appear for federal grand jury and would be held in contempt of court before a federal judge in Nicholas County.

The scammer asks the citizen for their cell phone number in order to pay the outstanding arrest warrants. If the citizen doesn't have a cell phone, they are told to buy a prepaid credit card so the money can be transferred onto it.

http://www.ago.wv.gov/pressroom/2015/Pages/Attorney-General-Morrisey-Alerts-West-Virginians-.aspx