CONSUMER PROTECTION REPORT:
August 1-31, 2015

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.

To sign up for the monthly consumer protection report, please click on the link below and enter your contact information.

Newsletter sign up: http://stateag.us4.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=9c3bb47bb6aba00473adb0c58&id=fdba3bae7b

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.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**CONSUMER PROTECTION CASES, SETTLEMENTS AND ADVOCACY STATEMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ARIZONA</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORIDA</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDAHO</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDIANA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOWA</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANSAS</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYLAND</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYLAND CONT’D</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASSACHUSETTS</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHIGAN</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MISSOURI</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW HAMPSHIRE</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW JERSEY</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW YORK</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH CAROLINA</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH DAKOTA</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHIO</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OREGON</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PENNSYLVANIA</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUTH DAKOTA</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXAS</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WASHINGTON</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WISCONSIN</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MULTISTATE CASES AND SETTLEMENTS</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDICAID FRAUD CASES AND SETTLEMENTS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARKANSAS</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORIDA</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KANSAS</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOUISIANA</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASSACHUSETTS</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEVADA</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW YORK</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKLAHOMA</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONSUMER ADVOCACY</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MULTISTATE ADVOCACY</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALABAMA</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONNECTICUT</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELAWARE</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDAHO</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILLINOIS</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENTUCKY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARYLAND</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASSACHUSETTS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ARIZONA

August 31, 2015

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich Files Consumer Fraud Lawsuit Against Timeshare Rental Telemarketing Business**

Attorney General Mark Brnovich filed a consumer fraud lawsuit today against Condosmart LLC, an Arizona-based timeshare resale and rental advertising business accused of making hundreds of unsolicited telemarketing calls to consumers who owned timeshare properties. The State’s complaint also alleges Condosmart engaged in deceptive and misleading business practices. Consumers in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and South Carolina may have paid Condosmart thousands of dollars for services that were not provided.


August 27, 2015

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich Announces Judgment In Solar Telemarketing Lawsuit**

Attorney General Mark Brnovich today announced the settlement of a consumer fraud lawsuit against Go Green Today, LLC (“Go Green”), an Arizona-based solar company that allegedly made thousands of unwanted telephone calls to consumers on the FTC’s National Do Not Call Registry (DNC). In addition to making unsolicited telemarketing calls, Go Green also violated the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act (ACFA) in the marketing and sale of solar products. Under the consent judgment, up to $55,000 in restitution will be paid to victims.

ARIZONA CONT’D

August 24, 2015

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich Announces Grand Jury Indictment Against Woman Accused Of Scamming Veterans Charities Out Of Thousands**

Attorney General Mark Brnovich today announced new felony charges against Chalice Renee Zeitner, an Arizona woman previously accused of faking cancer to obtain a state paid late-term abortion. Zeitner is now facing 8-felony charges for allegedly scamming veterans charities out of thousands of dollars. A grand jury indicted Zeitner on August 17, 2015.

During the cancer fraud investigation, authorities discovered Zeitner worked with Veterans Hope and Armed Forces Racing. Both organizations are closely connected with each other. In July 2012, Zeitner is alleged to have fraudulently obtained the personal information of the founder of Veterans Hope charities and his family. Zeitner allegedly used this information to open a credit card account under their names without their consent, charging approximately $25,000 on the card which Zeitner never paid off.


August 19, 2015

**Attorney General Mark Brnovich Announces Prison Sentences For Father And Son Who Defrauded Elderly In Tucson RV Scam**

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced the owners of multiple Tucson RV consignment businesses will go to prison for their role in defrauding 24 victims out of $423,542. Lorenzo Caracciolo Sr. was sentenced to five years in prison and his son, Lorenzo Caracciolo Jr., was sentenced to two and a half years in prison.

For more than three years, from January 2010 through October 2013, Lorenzo Caracciolo Sr. and Lorenzo Caracciolo Jr. used their RV consignment business to scam 24 victims out of thousands of dollars. Most of the victims are elderly. Their financial losses range from $3,400 to over $79,000 individually. The Caracciolo’s executed their fraud scheme by entering into
ARIZONA CONT’D

an agreement to sell a used RV on consignment with the RV’s owner. The Cacaccio-lo’s would then tell the owner that the RV had sold for a lower purchase price than had been offered and would pocket the additional proceeds. Additionally, defendants would deposit the entire sale proceeds into a personal bank account, and never transfer any money from the completed sale to the owner. Defendants employed their scheme through three business entities, Canyon State RV, Kickin’ Kampers, and RV Coachworks.


August 13, 2015

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Obtains Restitution For Victims In Arizona Moving Company Lawsuit

Attorney General Mark Brnovich announced today the settlement of a consumer fraud lawsuit against Allstars Movers and Storage Inc. and its owner, Amru Abdalla. The consent judgment prohibits Abdalla from engaging in the moving, packing, and/or storage business for two years.

In 2014, the Attorney General’s Office filed a consumer fraud lawsuit against Allstars, its owner, and its principals alleging the Defendants repeatedly violated the Arizona Consumer Fraud Act and a 2010 consent judgment, which the company entered into to resolve a prior lawsuit with the Attorney General’s Office. Shortly after the 2010 consent judgment, the lawsuit alleges Allstars continued their deceptive business practices by quoting prices to consumers over the telephone and then routinely added significant undisclosed charges to consumers’ invoices. When consumers refused to pay the undisclosed charges, the movers allegedly refused to unload consumers’ property from their moving trucks and threatened to hold consumers’ property hostage until they received payment. In all, the Attorney General’s Office received 55-consumer complaints against Allstars Movers from 2012 to 2014.

ARIZONA CONT’D

August 10, 2015

Attorney General Mark Brnovich Files Lawsuit Against "Notario Publico" For Alleged Consumer Fraud Targeting Spanish-Speaking Community

AG Brnovich files lawsuit against "Notario Publico" for alleged consumer fraud targeting spanish-speaking community

Attorney General Mark Brnovich today announced the filing of a consumer fraud lawsuit against a Tucson business accused of offering fraudulent legal services. The complaint alleges Ofelia Olivas Lizarraga, who did business as Multiservicios Olivas, LLC, falsely represented that she was qualified and authorized to provide legal advice and prepare legal documents on immigration, divorce, and other legal matters.


CALIFORNIA

August 10, 2015

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Announces Indictment of 32 Members and Associates of Long Beach Crip Street Gang Tied to $14.3 Million Identity Theft and Tax Fraud Scheme

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris announced today the takedown of a Long Beach Crip street gang that operated an identity theft scheme to perpetrate tax fraud, stealing over $3.3 million and attempting to steal over $11 million via tax fraud. The operation resulted in 22 members of the Insane Crip street gang being taken into custody on charges that include 283 counts of criminal conspiracy, 299 counts of identity theft, 226 counts of grand theft and 58 counts of attempted theft.

Attorney General Bondi Shuts Down Three Scams Targeting Florida Businesses

Attorney General Pam Bondi today obtained a temporary injunction and asset freezes against three corporations selling free government issued materials, overcharging for optional business certificates and misleading business owners into paying for unnecessary annual minutes. The corporations, United Business Services, Inc., United Certificate Services Inc. and Corporate Filing Services of Florida are all located in Pinellas County. According to the investigation, Jeremy Bauer and Travis Smith used these corporations to operate three scams aimed at defrauding Florida businesses.

One of the scams operated through UBS targeted newly registered businesses by soliciting payments for certificates of status. The Florida Division of Corporations sells certificates of status for $8.75 for corporations and $5 for LLCs. The certificates are optional and have no bearing on a business’s official status with the state; however UBS sent solicitations giving the impression that the certificates were mandatory and requesting payments between $47 and $53 per certificate.

Another scam, operated through CFSOF, involved soliciting payments for annual minutes. The solicitations misled victims into believing annual minutes were the same as an annual report, which businesses are required to file with the state. CFSOF solicited payments of $125 for annual minutes.

The final scam also operated through CFSOF, involved soliciting payment of $105 for Employee Law Posters. These posters are not required and any necessary postings are freely available at the United States Department of Labor’s website or various other locations.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/AD24E0AF2B6425B785257E9D006D5649
August 6, 2015

Attorney General Bondi Obtains Temporary Injunction Against Deceptive Debt Management and Credit Repair Companies

Attorney General Pam Bondi obtained a preliminary injunction against Financial Help Services, Inc., Nation Wide Consumer Debt Relief, Inc. and Bobby Blackmon over allegations that the defendants falsely promised to assist consumers lower their debt and improve poor credit. The complaint and temporary injunction filed by Attorney General Bondi alleges the defendants accepted payments from consumers but did not make promised payments to the consumers’ creditors on time, or sometimes even at all.

“These companies promised help and relief but all consumers received was heartache and more debt,” said Attorney General Bondi. “Even worse, the defendants targeted consumers who were proactively trying to lower their debt and improve their credit.”

According to the complaint and temporary injunction, when consumers inquired about why payments to creditors were not paid, the defendants provided fake invoices claiming that debts were paid. The defendants also told some consumers that it was the creditors’ fault and that the payments had been made, but just not posted yet. As a result of defendants’ failure to make payments, consumers’ credit scores dropped and penalty fees continued to increase.

The defendants also deceptively promised financial counseling services that were never provided. To date, the Florida Attorney General’s Office received more than 470 complaints about the defendants. The court also granted the Attorney General’s motion for a court-appointed third party to manage consumers’ funds until the case is resolved. The complaint seeks restitution for the complainants of more than $500,000, attorneys’ fees, and that the defendants are permanently prohibited from offering debt management and credit counseling services in Florida.

To view the complaint, click here.

IDAHO
August 3, 2015

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden Reaches Agreement with E. Idaho Hospital over Alleged Misuse of Charitable Assets

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden has resolved his investigation into allegations executives from a Blackfoot hospital misused charitable assets.

Wasden announced an agreement Monday with Bingham Memorial Hospital, Inc. that ends a three-year investigation and ensures its policies and procedures protect the nonprofit’s charitable assets. BMH also agreed to reimburse the Attorney General $50,000 for legal fees and investigative costs.

Wasden began investigating in 2012 amid allegations BMH officials had misappropriated some charitable assets from 2009 through 2012, including the alleged misuse of hospital-issued credit cards.


INDIANA
August 24, 2015

Attorney General Greg Zoeller Announces Customers of Former Lake County Furniture Store To Receive Refunds For Undelivered

The owner of a former Lake County furniture store accused of failing to deliver pre-paid products to customers after the store closed its doors in April 2013 must refund 27 customers $21,838.72 under a court agreement reached with the State.

Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller’s Office filed a lawsuit against Selectionals furniture store owner Carly E. Borrelo in May 2013 after receiving complaints from people who paid in full for furniture that they never received. Consumers made payments in amounts ranging from $125 to nearly $3,000.

Selectionals furniture store was formerly located at 2133 Southlake Mall in Merrillville and collected money from customers since at least October 2012.
IOWA
August 20, 2015

**Attorney General Tom Miller Sues New Jersey Mailing Operations Tied to European Psychic Scheme**

*Miller seeks injunction barring companies from helping European scammers bilk elderly Iowans*

Attorney General Tom Miller Wednesday filed a consumer fraud lawsuit against two New Jersey companies and their owner for their role in helping facilitate marketing, billing and debt collections in Iowa on behalf of fraudulent European psychic operations.

The lawsuit filed against TCA Mailing Inc. and T. Clements & Associates Inc., both of Clifton, and the companies’ owner Timothy J. Clements, of Bordentown, alleged that the defendants actively coordinated with the psychic operations in mailing Iowans offers of a free personal analysis by a famous psychic, billing those who accepted the free analysis, and then sending threatening collection letters to consumers who refused to pay the unfounded bills.


KANSAS
August 26, 2015

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Schmidt Sues New York Company For Violating No Call Act**

*Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt has sued a New York-based business for violating the Kansas No Call Act.*

In 2014, the attorney general’s office received multiple complaints from Kansans who had received telemarketing calls from callers who identified themselves as representatives of “Farmway,” a local supplier with no connection to the defendants or the alleged telephone calls. The callers were trying to sell agricultural chemicals. Schmidt filed suit against Carso Inc.
d/b/a Supply House, d/b/a Coating and Chemicals, Donna Decianni Spano and Jack Caratozzolo, all of New York state. The suit was filed last week in Shawnee County District Court, and the defendants were recently served with process.


August 17, 2015

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Unregistered Roofer Prohibited From Doing Business**

A Chapman roofing contractor has been prohibited from doing business in Kansas, following a recent lawsuit accusing him of failing to comply with Kansas consumer protection laws, Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.

Last Friday, Dickinson County District Judge Ryan W. Rosauer entered a temporary restraining order prohibiting Michael Allen Chapin, Chapman, from operating as a roofing contractor in Kansas pending the outcome of a lawsuit filed by the attorney general’s office.

In a petition filed last month, Schmidt accused Chapin of engaging in the business of, or capacity as, a roofing contractor within Kansas without having a valid roofing registration certificate. Chapin had allegedly performed roofing work on a Chapman home and failed to adequately protect the unfinished roof during a rainstorm, causing thousands of dollars in damage.


August 11, 2015

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Roofer Banned From Doing Business In Kansas**

A Derby roofer has been banned from doing business in Kansas after failing to register with the attorney general’s office or respond to a lawsuit filed in May, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said today.
In a default judgment entered in Mitchell County District Court, Chief Judge Kim W. Cudney ordered Mike’s General Contracting, LLC, to pay a $40,000 civil penalty and permanently enjoined the company from performing roofing services in Kansas without a registration certificate from the attorney general’s office. The company is registered to Phong “Mike” Nguyen of Derby, according to records filed with the Secretary of State’s office.


MARYLAND
August 28, 2015

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh Secures Settlement with Company That Allegedly Locked Residents From Homes And Damaged Property

Nation’s Largest Mortgage Services Company Agrees to Improve Practices

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced a settlement with Ohio-based Safeguard Properties, resolving claims that the company’s inadequate policies and procedures resulted in Marylanders being wrongfully locked out of their homes or having their property damaged and belongings taken. Safeguard is the nation's largest mortgage field services company, and contracts with lenders and mortgage servicers to provide services related to inspecting, maintaining and repairing homes in default or in foreclosure.

Under the settlement reached by the Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division, Safeguard will reform its practices to protect homeowners from future abuses and will return money to impacted Marylanders.

http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2015/082815.html
MARYLAND CONT'D
August 19, 2015

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh Announces Eye Care Retailer SETTLES in Data Security Lapse

Visionworks misplaces computer servers with consumers' personal information, agrees to pay $100K

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that the Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division entered into a settlement agreement with Visionworks, LLC, resolving an investigation into two data breaches the company experienced in 2014 that affected more than 72,000 Marylanders.

Visionworks failed to properly secure consumers’ personal information while upgrading to fully encrypted servers at stores in Annapolis and Jacksonville, Fla. The old servers were left unsecured in the stores, with consumers’ names, addresses, dates of birth and purchasing histories still on the hard drives. Both servers also contained three days of encrypted credit card data. They were accidentally misplaced and are believed to have been taken to landfills.

http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2015/081915.html

MASSACHUSETTS
August 19, 2015

Attorney General Maura Healey Sues Mortgage Broker and Insurance Agent for Taking Advantage of Elderly Homeowners

Defendants Allegedly Convinced Senior Clients to Invest in Risky Financial Products in Order to Earn Commissions

A Norwell-based mortgage broker, one of its loan originators, and an outside insurance agent have been sued for sales tactics that convinced elderly homeowners to apply for reverse mortgages and invest their proceeds in risky financial products, including variable annuities, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The complaint, filed Tuesday in Suffolk Superior Court against mortgage broker Direct Finance Corp. (DFC), its employee Daniel Matthews, and
insurance agent James Moniz, alleges they earned significant commissions as a result of their scheme. Several of these consumers were widows who wanted ready access to their money but instead faced severe withdrawal penalties if they accessed more than a small percentage of their proceeds for the first several years the annuities were in place.


MICHIGAN
August 27, 2015

Attorney General Bill Schuette Files Civil Suit Against Florida Scam Artists Targeting Michigan Small Business Owners

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette today filed a civil lawsuit to prevent a Florida based company, Division of Corporate Services Inc. and its officers Chad Davis, Joshua Strawn and Tate Howe, from further operation in the state of Michigan after allegations of deceitful business practices designed to dupe Michigan small businesses and non-profit organizations.

The lawsuit alleges that the company sent misleading mailings designed to look like an official state form that corporate representatives are required to complete yearly to keep their businesses in good standing. Recipients were asked to complete and return the form with payment to a Lansing address. It is alleged the responding businesses were actually buying fake meeting minutes for their business. The suit also seeks $150 refunds for all Michigan businesses that responded to the mailing.

http://www.michigan.gov/ag/0,4534,7-164-46849-47203-363364--,00.html
MISSOURI
August 20, 2015

Attorney General Chris Koster Obtains Restitution For Consumer Victims Of Timeshare Sales Company

Attorney General Chris Koster today announced that Welk Resort Sales, Inc., a California corporation that sells timeshares in Branson, has entered into an agreement to pay $18,000 in restitution to Missouri consumers who purchased timeshares from Welk. This money will be refunded to 15 Missouri consumer victims. In addition, any agreement between these consumers and Welk has been terminated.

The Attorney General's Office had received consumer complaints about Welk, including being misled about the benefits from their timeshare ownership and how they could use, cancel or sell their timeshares.


August 20, 2015

Attorney General Chris Koster Obtains Judgment Against Kansas City Area Contractor

Attorney General Chris Koster announced today that his office obtained a judgment against William Lahn, a contractor in the Kansas City area, in Jackson County Circuit Court. The court found Lahn to be in violation of Missouri's Merchandising Practices Act for taking upfront payments for construction and concrete jobs without completing the work as promised or providing refunds to consumers. Lahn failed to respond to the lawsuit.

MISSOURI CONT’D

August 19, 2015

Attorney General Chris Koster Obtains Restitution For Consumers, Civil Penalties Against Home-Security Company

Attorney General Chris Koster today announced that Vision Security, LLC (“Vision”), a Utah-based home security company, has entered into an agreement to pay $10,000 in civil penalties and pay restitution to Missouri consumers who were harmed by the company’s deceptive business practices. More than $2,000 will be refunded to 15 Missouri consumer victims. In addition, Vision has canceled or will cancel the contracts for these 15 victims, resulting in more than $37,000 of debt forgiveness.

An investigation by the Attorney General’s Office, the Jackson County Prosecutor’s Office, and numerous law enforcement agencies across the state found that Vision’s sales representatives engaged in deceptive business practices by misrepresenting the identity of the company they worked for, the terms of the home-security contract, the rescission period and cancellation policies of the contract, and local crime rates.

https://www.ago.mo.gov/home/ag-koster-obtains-restitution-for-consumers-civil-penalties-against-home-security-company

NEW HAMPSHIRE

August 11, 2015

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster Announces Court Issues Final Order to Shut Down Veterans Museum of New Hampshire

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster announces that the Charitable Trusts Unit has obtained a final court order against a registered New Hampshire charitable organization, Veterans Museum of New Hampshire, and its president, Henry T. Pratte. Following a trial, the Court has now ordered the dissolution of the Museum organization and has ordered Mr. Pratte to pay a $10,000 civil penalty as well as $1,000 in restitution to a veteran who gave money to the Museum. Mr. Pratte is also barred for ten years from involvement with any New Hampshire charitable organization.
August 10, 2015

**Attorney General Joseph A. Foster Announces Investment Advisor Sentenced to up to 7 Years in Prison for Fraud Ordered to Pay $624,771.00 in Restitution to Victims**

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster announces that Richard M. Higgins (“Higgins”) of Stratham, NH was sentenced today in Merrimack County Superior Court to serve 5 to 14 years in prison after pleading guilty to one felony count of engaging in a course of conduct involving a scheme to defraud in connection with the purchase and sale of securities, and one felony count of a course of business that operated as fraud in connection with acting as an investment advisor.

August 7, 2015

**Attorney General Joseph A. Foster Resolves Allegations of Consumer Protection Violations Against H&R Block for Erroneously Charging 656 New Hampshire Consumers. Consumers to Receive a Total of $32,587.00 in Refunds.**

Attorney General Joseph A. Foster announces that his Consumer Protection and Antitrust Bureau has entered into an Assurance of Discontinuance with HRB Tax Group, Inc., doing business in New Hampshire as H&R Block. The Assurance resolves allegations that H&R Block violated the State’s Consumer Protection Act by erroneously charging consumers for the preparation of a New Hampshire business and profits tax return, when, in fact, no such return was warranted or filed on behalf of those consumers.

Under the terms of the Assurance, H&R Block was required to refund 656 New Hampshire consumers a total $33,587.30. H&R Block agreed to issue a full refund, with interest, by July 15, 2015 to all 656 consumers. In addition, H&R Block must develop and implement improved protocols and quality control systems designed to prevent this sort of erroneous charge in the
future. It must also develop and implement improved training for New Hampshire tax return preparers who have direct contact with New Hampshire consumers on the need to verify the appropriate use, and billing, for New Hampshire business tax returns.


NEW JERSEY
August 31, 2015

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces Title Company Owner Pleads Guilty to Stealing $7.7 Million Entrusted to Him to Pay Off Mortgages

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman announced that a title company owner pleaded guilty today to criminal charges for stealing a total of $7.7 million entrusted to him as a settlement agent to pay off multiple mortgage loans in connection with real estate closings he handled.

Robert M. Sebia, 50, of Wilkes Barre, Pa., who owned and operated Crystal Title Agency, LLC, pleaded guilty today to an accusation charging him with second-degree theft by failure to make required disposition of property received and second-degree misconduct by a corporate official before Superior Court Judge Michael Toto in Middlesex County. Under the plea agreement, the state will recommend that Sebia be sentenced to six years in state prison on the theft charge and five years in prison on the other charge, with the sentences to run consecutively, for a total sentence of 11 years in state prison. He must surrender his New Jersey insurance license and enter a civil consent judgment to pay restitution of $7.7 million to First American Title Insurance Company, which was responsible for paying the claims filed as a result of Sebia’s thefts. Judge Toto scheduled sentencing for Sebia for Nov. 9.

http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20150831a.html
NEW JERSEY CONT’D

August 17, 2015

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Reaches Settlement with Sussex County Auto Dealership in Connection with Consumer Fraud Allegations**

The Office of the Attorney General and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs have reached a settlement with JDN AA, LLC ("JDN AA"), which operates Newton Audi and Newton Volkswagen auto dealerships, resolving an action filed by the State in June 2015. As part of the settlement, JDN AA, LLC has agreed to pay $50,000 to the State. This payment includes $31,655.95 in civil penalties, with the balance reimbursing the State for its legal and investigative costs.

The State’s four-count complaint, filed in State Superior Court in Sussex County alleged that, among other things, JDN AA committed unconscionable commercial practices, did not disclose required information in advertisements, and did not pay required Used Car Lemon Law fees. [http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20150817a.html](http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20150817a.html)

August 3, 2015

**Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces Systrum Energy to Pay $554,000, Reform Business Practices, in Settlement with New Jersey Attorney General, Division of Consumer Affairs, and Board of Public Utilities**

*Third-Party Energy Supplier Allegedly Failed to Deliver on Promises of Significant Savings for Electrical and/or Natural Gas Service*

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU), and the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs, announced that Fairview-based Keil & Sons, Inc., d/b/a Systrum Energy ("Systrum"), has agreed to pay $554,698.06, including $436,131.61 in consumer restitution; has stopped selling electric and/or natural gas service to residential consumers; and will make other changes to its business practices, in order to resolve the State’s allegations that the third-party energy supplier deceived consumers by promising they would save money by switching from their utility providers.
NEW YORK
August 26, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Seeks Criminal Contempt Charges Against Fraudulent Western NY Contractor**

*George Anna, Who Has Already Served Jail Time For Scamming Consumers, Accused Of Violating Previous Court Order By Targeting More Victims*

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that he is seeking criminal contempt charges against George Anna, a Western New York home improvement contractor, for a second time. In 2012, the Attorney General obtained a court order barring Anna from the home improvement business unless he first posted a $100,000 performance bond. In 2014, Attorney General Schneiderman learned that Anna was holding himself out as a home contractor, despite never having posted the bond. As a result, in July 2014, Anna was sentenced to 90 days in jail. Anna has allegedly again violated the court order and Attorney General Schneiderman is seeking criminal contempt charges.


August 19, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Return Of Additional $4.5 Million To 15,000 Citi Customers For Fee Overcharges**

*Schneiderman’s Investigation Will Return More Than $20.5 Million In Total Reimbursement To More Than 46,000 Overcharged Customers*

NEW YORK– Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that as a result of an interim agreement with Citigroup Global Markets, Inc. (CGMI), a subsidiary of Citigroup, more than 15,000 CGMI customers who were overcharged fees on their investment accounts will receive reimbursements totaling more than $4.5 million. Customers were overcharged when CGMI failed to rebate certain customers’ accounts after periods of inactivity when fees should not have been charged, but were. CGMI identified the overcharges
as part of an internal review conducted in cooperation with the Attorney General’s investigation of CGMI fees. The investigation previously led to $16 million in principal and interest going back to 31,000 CGMI customers, and now thousands more customers are eligible to get money back.


August 6, 2015

**A.G. Schneiderman Announces Agreement With Yonkers Police Department To Establish Formal Language Access Policy**

*City Police Department Adopts Measures to Improve Delivery of and Access to Police Services for Growing Limited English Proficient (LEP) Community*

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that the Yonkers Police Department has adopted formal, agency-wide language access policies to better serve the community’s Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents.

The agreement calls for the adoption of policies and practices that will improve delivery of law enforcement services to the diverse LEP community of Yonkers and enhance police-community relationships, for everyone’s benefit.


---

**NORTH CAROLINA**

August 26, 2015

**Attorney General Roy Cooper Announces Home Repair Companies Banned From Business, Ordered To Pay Refunds**

*Eagle Roofing and Jim’s Black Top Paving took money upfront, never completed repairs*

Two local home repair companies have been ordered to pay more than $700,000 in refunds and penalties after misleading dozens of consumers, Attorney General Roy Cooper said today.
At the request of Cooper’s Consumer Protection Division, Wake County Superior Court Judge Henry W. Hight, Jr. ordered defendant Brian William Smith of Eagle Roofing and Restoration to pay $148,308.57 in restitution to consumers, and pay up to $366,709 in civil penalties and investigation costs. Judge Hight also ordered defendant James Stevens, Jr. of Jim’s Black Top Paving to pay $48,750 in restitution and up to $196,750 in civil penalties and investigation costs.


NORTH DAKOTA
August 24, 2015

Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem Announces Time Share Vacation Scam Artist Banned In North Dakota

An Oklahoma woman who sold time share vacations has been banned from conducting business in North Dakota. Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem issued a Cease & Desist Order against Diahann Cott of Miami, Oklahoma, dba CheapBranson Fun, Christian Travel, and Galaxy Christian Ministry, for violations of North Dakota’s home solicitations sales law, consumer fraud laws and Do Not Call laws.

Cott made telephone solicitations offering cheap vacations opportunities to consumers if they first attended a timeshare seminar and paid a $99 attendance fee. The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint from an elderly individual whose number was registered on the Do Not Call list. He reported that he agreed to attend one of Cott’s timeshare seminars but when he changed his mind, Cott told him the fee was non-refundable and charged his credit card.

August 17, 2015

Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem Announces Florida Company Banned For Making Interest Rate Reduction Robocalls

Cease & Desist Order issued against Mark Ebohimen, dba People’s Choice Assistance, LLC., MAE Holdings Corp, and PC Solutions.

A Florida scam operation has been banned from doing business in North Dakota. Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem issued a cease and desist order against Mark Ebohimen, doing business as People's Choice Assistance, LLC., MAE Holdings Corp, and PC Solutions, for violations of the Do Not Call law and consumer fraud. Ebohimen was running a sham operation leaving illegal pre-recorded messages with deceptive offers to lower the interest rate on the consumer’s credit cards.


August 11, 2015

Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem Announces Fraudulent Contractor Bilked Homeowners

Cease and Desist Order issued against Joe Beaulieu of Minnesota, DBA Dakotah Roofing & Remodeling, LLC.

A Minnesota man who took advantage of an elderly North Dakota homeowner is banned from doing business in the state. Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem issued a Cease & Desist Order against Joe Beaulieu, DBA Dakotah Roofing & Remodeling, LLC. Beaulieu lists addresses in Blaine, Waubun and Bloomington, Minnesota.

The Attorney General’s Consumer Protection division initiated an investigation after receiving a complaint in January this year from an elderly homeowner who made advance payments of over $91,000 to Beaulieu in 2013 for repairs to her home.

Beaulieu had promised to finish the repairs within two months, but more than two years later over $50,000 worth of repairs still had not been completed. Beaulieu had also persuaded the elderly consumer to advance him
additional funds, allegedly to pay his employees. The check he used to repay the consumer was returned for insufficient funds.


**OHIO**
August 26, 2015

**Ohio Man Sentenced to Eight Years in Prison for Stealing More than $1 Million in Investment Scheme Targeting Elderly**

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine, Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Timothy McGinty, and Ohio Lieutenant Governor Mary Taylor announced today that a Medina County man has been sentenced to serve eight years in prison for orchestrating an investment scheme that primarily targeted older Ohioans between 2009 and 2014.

**Dennis Flood**, 64, of Brunswick, pleaded guilty in Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court last month to felony charges of engaging in a pattern of corrupt activity and aggravated theft. He was sentenced today by Judge Hollie Gallagher to serve eight years in prison and pay a total of $1,153,163.77 in restitution to the victims who lost money in connection with the scheme.

http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Media/News-Releases/August-2015/Ohio-Man-Sentenced-to-Eight-Years-in-Prison-for-St

**OREGON**
August 18, 2015

**Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and DCBS Sue Predatory Title Loan Operator**

Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum and the Department of Consumer and Business Services (DCBS) today filed a lawsuit against Liquidation LLC, for offering predatory car title loans to more than 250 Oregonians and ignoring Oregon consumer and business laws by operating an illegal car title scam.

The lawsuit alleges that the sophisticated scam worked when unsuspecting Oregon consumers searched online for “title loans” and filled out an application by a third-party loan-referral site. The third-party site then sent their personal information to a company calling itself Auto Loans, LCC or Car
Loan, LLC. Oregon consumers thought they were applying for a legal title loan, but were deceived into listing Auto Loans, LCC or Car Loans, LLC as a secured interest holder on their car titles. In addition, the consumers did not know that the company had labeled the loan as a ‘pawn loan’ to be repaid in 11 monthly payments, with a final balloon payment equal to or more than the amount originally borrowed. Consumers with loans from either of these companies should stop paying these illegal loans immediately.

http://www.doj.state.or.us/releases/Pages/2015/rel081815.aspx

August 5, 2015

**Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum Settles with Pharmaceutical Company Insys over Unlawful Promotion of the Powerful Opioid Subsys®**

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum today reached a $1.1 million settlement with Insys, the company that manufactures the schedule II opioid drug Subsys, to resolve allegations that the powerful drug approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat cancer pain was marketed in Oregon for off-label uses such as non-cancer neck and back pain. The Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC) also resolves allegations that the company provided improper financial incentives to some doctors to increase Subsys prescriptions, targeted doctors for aggressive promotion of Subsys when the doctor was not qualified to prescribe the drug, and deceptively promoted Subsys for treatment of mild pain. Oregon is the first government entity to settle with Insys for this alleged misconduct.

http://www.doj.state.or.us/releases/Pages/2015/rel080515.aspx

**PENNSYLVANIA**

August 27, 2015

**Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane Reaches Settlement Agreement With Security System Provider**

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane today announced her office has entered a settlement agreement with a security system provider accused of making false representations to consumers during door-to-door sales presentations.
The settlement with Utah-based Vision Security, LLC is the result of an investigation by the Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

The company was accused of erroneously informing consumers that their current security system providers were going out of business or were acquired by Vision Security. The alleged misrepresentations led consumers to switch from their home security providers to Vision Security.

Under the terms of the settlement agreement, Vision Security paid $35,000 in penalties and costs to the Commonwealth. Vision Security cooperated with the Commonwealth throughout the investigation and satisfied consumer complaints by cancelling consumers’ contracts.

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2050

August 24, 2015

**Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane: York County Businessman Misrepresented Himself As Attorney To Prisoners**

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane today announced her office has filed a lawsuit against the owner of a York County business accused of misrepresenting himself as an attorney to people who were in prison.

The lawsuit against Brandon H. Schnetzka also names his company, The ILS Firm, LLC — also known as Inmate Liaison Service — as a defendant. It was filed by the Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

The lawsuit alleges Schnetzka and his business engaged in unauthorized practice of law by promising legal services to incarcerated individuals and their families. Schnetzka was not a licensed attorney.

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2044
Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane Files Legal Action Against Erie County Woman And Former Business

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane today announced her office has filed a legal action against the former principal of an Erie County business accused of misleading consumers through advertisements.

The legal action against Christine J. Neubauer also names her former company, Sell House in 1 Hour, LLC, as a defendant. It was filed in the Erie County Court of Common Pleas by the Office of Attorney General's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

The legal action alleges Neubauer’s advertising did not represent the actual services that were offered to consumers once they contacted her business. The ads, which appeared on her website, www.sellhousein1hour.com, and Craigslist, among other places, claimed the company would buy property “as is,” for “cash” and some signs said “stop foreclosure.” Other ads offered “quick sales” and “no realtor fees.”

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2030

Attorney General Kane: Third Settlement With Electric Generation Supplier Would Provide $2.4 Million More In Refunds

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane and Acting Consumer Advocate Tanya J. McCloskey today announced a proposed settlement with a third electric generation supplier accused of deceptively marketing its variable electric rates to Pennsylvania consumers, many of whom filed complaints about spikes in their rates during the winter of 2014.

Under the settlement, IDT Energy, Inc. has agreed to pay $2.4 million in refunds to eligible consumers in addition to the $4.1 million the company has already paid. The company must also pay a civil penalty of $25,000 and make a contribution of $75,000 to the Electric Distribution Companies’ hardship funds.
Combined with two earlier settlements with other electric generation suppliers, the additional amount of refunds for eligible consumers now stands in excess of $6 million.


SOUTH DAKOTA
August 7, 2015

Attorney General Marty Jackley Announces Out-of-State Transient Pavers Indicted on Deceptive Trade Practices Violations

Attorney General Marty Jackley announced today that Henry Josh Harrison, 46, Spiro, Oklahoma and Nailor L. Harrison Jr, 49, Carthage, MO were indicted on charges stemming from transient contractor work they were performing in several South Dakota counties. The Harrisons were operating under the business name RNH Paving


TEXAS
August 17, 2015

Attorney General Ken Paxton Takes Action to Halt Operations of More than a Dozen “Diploma Mills” in North Texas

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit against a Dallas-based group of learning centers for unlawfully marketing and selling fraudulent high school diplomas and transcripts. The petition, filed in Dallas County district court, seeks a permanent injunction against seven individuals and thirteen schools operating as diploma mills in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, in violation of the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act (DTPA).

According to court documents filed in Dallas County district court on Friday, August 14, Eddie Minnieweather and six other co-defendants operated a collection of diploma mill high schools across north Texas under multiple aliases. They used false and misleading statements to lure students to their “accredited” diploma program, which students were told would gain them
admission into community colleges or into the military. After paying up to $500, however, students did not obtain academic instruction, grading or feedback. Upon graduation, they quickly found out that their diploma was not accepted by community colleges, technical colleges, the military, as was promised.


WASHINGTON
August 19, 2015

Attorney General Bob Ferguson Announces Sweep To Crack Down On Illegal Immigration Assistance

Enforcement action against four companies, hundreds of thousands in penalties and restitution sought to curb immigration services fraud

Today Attorney General Bob Ferguson announced that his office is taking action to combat illegal immigration services and crack down on “notario” fraud. The AG’s Office filed legal actions involving four separate entities engaged in scams targeting immigrant consumers in Washington. Ferguson also announced a $125,000 grant to prevent immigration services fraud and ensure immigrant consumers have greater access to legal assistance.

Joined by community leaders from Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, OneAmerica, the American Immigration Lawyers Association of Washington, and the Chinese Information and Service Center, Ferguson announced the actions are part of an initiative to increase enforcement of Washington’s consumer protection laws against unauthorized immigration assistance.

**Attorney General Bob Ferguson Announces Judge Orders Student Loan Adjustment Firm To Pay Back Students In AG Enforcement Action**

Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced that a King County Superior Court judge has ordered a student loan processing company that unlawfully charged borrowers to pay back its Washington victims.

“This firm preyed on students who sought their help, charging exorbitant and illegal fees,” Ferguson said. “In 1995, I graduated from law school owing $100,000 in debt, so I know that paying student loans can be a challenge. I will not tolerate the financial abuse of already overburdened Washington State students.”

Ferguson brought a lawsuit against StudentLoanProcessing.US (SLP) and its president, James Krause, for violating Washington’s Debt Adjustment Act and Consumer Protection Act, by charging illegal fees for debt adjusting and failing to inform customers of important rights as is legally required.


---

**WISCONSIN**

August 31 2015

**Attorney General Brad D. Schimel Announces $1.8 Million in Restitution Available for Travel Club Members**

The Wisconsin Department of Justice has obtained $1.8 million to distribute as restitution to eligible Wisconsin residents who were victimized by Illinois-based Travel Services, Inc., and its principals, William Bailey and Christy Spensberger.

The funds were obtained through a settlement with Travel Services, Inc., Bailey and Spensberger, under which they will pay a total of $2.3 million. Pursuant to a court order entered on August 26, 2015, $1.8 million of the settlement funds will be available for restitution and costs associated with distribution to eligible club members. The remainder of the funds are allocated to civil forfeitures and the State’s costs of prosecution.

MULTISTATE CASES AND SETTLEMENTS

August 26, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman And RadioShack Settle Dispute Over Unredeemed Gift Cards

Agreement Requires RadioShack To Refund Full Value Of Unredeemed Gift Cards Purchased By Consumers

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has reached a settlement in principle with RadioShack that will pay holders of unredeemed gift cards that were purchased by consumers at 100% of the value of their cards. The agreement applies to gift cards purchased from RadioShack or other merchants who sold RadioShack gift cards and applies to consumers nationwide. The settlement does not impose a minimum dollar threshold for consumer claims and is supported by the Attorneys General of Texas, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Tennessee, and New Hampshire.


August 18, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Multistate Settlement With Pharmaceutical Company Amgen Inc. For Promoting Off-Label Use Of Aranesp And Enbrel

Attorney General Schneiderman, 47 Other State Attorneys General And The District Of Columbia Reached A $71 Million Consumer Settlement With Amgen Concerning Biologic Medications Aranesp® And Enbrel®

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a $71 million multistate settlement with Amgen Inc. to resolve allegations that the pharmaceutical company unlawfully promoted biologic medications Aranesp and Enbrel for off-label uses. The Complaint and Consent Judgment filed today alleges that Amgen violated state consumer protection laws by: (1) promoting Aranesp for dosing frequencies longer than the FDA approved label without competent and reliable scientific evidence to substantiate the extended dosing frequencies; (2) promoting Aranesp for anemia caused by cancer without having FDA approval or competent and reliable scientific evidence to support it; (3) promoting Enbrel for mild plaque psoriasis even though Enbrel is only approved by the FDA to treat chronic moderate to severe plaque psoriasis; and (4) overstating the length of Enbrel’s efficacy in
treated plaque psoriasis. By obtaining a compendium listing (typically, a non-profit reference book listing a drug’s strengths, qualities and ingredients) for Aranesp for anemia of cancer, Amgen unlawfully facilitated health care coverage and reimbursement for the drug.


August 4, 2015

**State Joins $2.7 Million National Settlement with Pediatric Services of America, Inc. to Resolve Overcharging Allegations**

Attorney General George Jepsen, Chief State’s Attorney Kevin T. Kane and state Department of Social Services (DSS) Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby announced today that Connecticut has joined a federal-state settlement with Pediatric Services of America Inc. (PSA) to resolve allegations that the company inappropriately failed to return overpayments received from state Medicaid programs as well as other federally insured health programs. PSA is also alleged to have overcharged for home nursing services by improperly rounding-up claims to the nearest whole hour. The Georgia-based pediatric and home-care company has agreed to pay the states and the federal government $2.7 million.

MEDICAID FRAUD CASES AND SETTLEMENTS

ARKANSAS
August 17, 2015

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Announces Arrest of Craighead County Man For Billing The Arkansas Medicaid Program More Than $55,000 For Services That Were Not Rendered

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge announced the arrest of a Craighead County man by the Attorney General's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

Emmitt Paul Milam, 45, of Jonesboro was arrested on one count of Medicaid fraud. Milam was booked into the Pulaski County Jail where he posted bond and was released. He is accused of billing the Arkansas Medicaid Program more than $55,000 for services that were not rendered, a Class B felony.


August 1, 2015

Attorney General Leslie Rutledge Announces Arrest of Mississippi County Woman For Billing The Arkansas Medicaid Program $1,900 For Medicaid Services She Did Not Perform

Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge announced the arrest of a Mississippi County woman by the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit.

Lenisha Nicole Daniels, 31, of Blytheville, was arrested on one count of Medicaid fraud. On Monday, July 27, she turned herself into the Pulaski County Jail where she posted bond and was released. Daniels is accused of billing the Arkansas Medicaid Program $1,900 for Medicaid services she did not perform. Plea and arraignment hearings will be set in Pulaski County District Court at a later date.

August 24, 2015

Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Mother and Daughter Arrested for submitted billing records of more than $100,000 for filing claims that are not reimbursable by Medicaid

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit today announced the arrests of a private duty nurse and her daughter for Medicaid provider fraud and grand theft in Bay County, Fla. Kimberly Mills, 49, while employed as a private duty nurse, allegedly stole more than $50,000 from her employer and submitted billing records of more than $100,000 for filing claims that are not reimbursable by Medicaid. According to the investigation, Kayla Moore, 28, Mills’ daughter, aided and abetted her mother in the fraudulent filings.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/0FB08A0E7D60A62A85257EAB006D7A04

August 24, 2015

Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Duval County Home Health Service Provider Arrested for Defrauding Florida Medicaid

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Jacksonville Sheriff’s Office today announced the arrest of Mark C. Assar, 35, a former employee of CR & RA Investments, Inc., for defrauding the Florida Medicaid program out of more than $1,000. According to the investigation following a complaint from the Agency for Healthcare Administration, Assar caused false claims of service to be submitted to and reimbursed by the Florida Medicaid program.

http://www.myfloridalegal.com/newsrel.nsf/newsreleases/7A6086007B0692CC85257EAB004E87C7
August 4, 2015

**Attorney General Pam Bondi Announces Tallahassee Woman Arrested For Allegedly Submitted More Than $10,000 In Claims For Unauthorized Services To Medicaid**

Attorney General Pam Bondi’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Leon County Sheriff’s Office today arrested a Tallahassee woman for allegedly defrauding the Florida Medicaid program. Darelene Johnson, 51, the consumer representative for a disabled adult, allegedly submitted more than $10,000 in claims for unauthorized services.

According to the investigation following a complaint from the Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Johnson submitted claims to the APD Community Direct Care Plus Program for services provided by Tamira Jones. CDC+ is a long-term care program alternative to the Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services Medicaid Waiver. Jones was arrested in 2013 for possession of narcotics with intent to distribute, disqualifying her from providing services. Johnson spoke on Jones’s behalf at a first appearance hearing on the morning after Jones’s arrest and did not disclose this information to APD, as required. Johnson allegedly continued to bill APD for services provided by Jones.


---

**KANSAS**

August 28, 2015

**Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Kansas City Woman Ordered To Repay $21,000 For Fraudulently Billing Medicaid**

A Kansas City woman was ordered today to repay more than $21,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after pleading no contest to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Linda Marie Bonner, 59, pleaded no contest in May in Wyandotte County District Court to one count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program.
KANSAS CONT’D

Judge Michael Grosko today ordered Bonner to repay $21,261 to the Kansas Medicaid Program. Judge Grosko also sentenced Bonner to 12 months probation with an underlying sentence of 8 months in prison and 12 months post release supervision. Convictions such as this one also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program.


August 21, 2015

Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Wichita Woman Ordered To Repay $41,000 For Submitting False Claims to Medicaid

A Wichita woman was ordered today to repay more than $41,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after pleading no contest to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Joyce Ann Spencer, 59, pleaded no contest in July in Sedgwick County District Court to one count of making a false claim to the Medicaid program. Judge Eric Yost today ordered Spencer to repay $41,386 to the Kansas Medicaid Program in addition to sentencing her to 24 months probation. Convictions such as this one also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program.


August 14, 2015

Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Wichita Woman Ordered To Repay Medicaid Program For Home Health Fraud

A Wichita woman was ordered today to repay more than $7,000 to the Kansas Medicaid program after pleading guilty to Medicaid fraud-related charges, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.
Bounloem Thongsophaphone, 33, pleaded guilty in July in Sedgwick County District Court to one count of unlawful acts concerning computers. Judge David J. Kaufman today ordered Thongsophaphone to repay $7,440.56 to the Kansas Medicaid Program in addition to sentencing her to 18 months probation. Convictions such as this one also result in a period during which the defendant is prohibited from being paid wages through a government health care program.


August 12, 2015

Attorney General Derek Schmidt Announces Madison Woman Ordered To Pay Restitution To Medicaid For Submitting False Claims

A Madison woman was ordered today to pay more than $10,000 in restitution related to Medicaid fraud, Kansas Attorney General Derek Schmidt said.

Kristy Hamilton-Janssen, 42, was ordered by Judge Gary House to pay $10,292 in restitution to the Kansas Medicaid program. Judge House also sentenced Hamilton-Janssen to 24 months probation with an underlying sentence of 24 months in prison and 12 months post release supervision.

The charges stemmed from an investigation by the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud and Abuse Division which revealed that in August and November of 2009 Hamilton-Janssen fraudulently billed Medicaid for durable medical equipment that was never delivered. In May, Hamilton-Janssen pleaded guilty to two counts of unlawful acts relating to the Medicaid program. A co-defendant, Walter Gibson, of Independence, was convicted in 2013 in Montgomery County District Court of related crimes against the Medicaid program.

LOUISIANA
August 28, 2015

**Attorney General Caldwell’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Arrests Mother/Daughter Duo for Medicaid Fraud Scheme**

Attorney General James D. “Buddy” Caldwell announced today that four individuals have been charged with Medicaid fraud, including a mother and daughter accused of conspiring to defraud the Louisiana Medicaid program.

Tavonjia Hills Scott, 44, and her daughter, Dominiqua Hills, 23, both of 1627 East Villien Street, Abbeville, were arrested today by the Attorney General’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for conspiring to defraud the Medicaid program. Dominiqua Hills is charged with one count of felony Medicaid fraud for submitting time sheets and service logs that indicated she was at home caring for her mother, a Medicaid recipient, when she was in fact working for her full-time employer in Lafayette. Tavonjia Hills Scott, Hill’s mother, signed the falsified time sheets and service logs, and she is charged with one count of criminal conspiracy to commit Medicaid fraud.

[https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=1089&catID=2](https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=1089&catID=2)

August 21, 2015

**Attorney General Caldwell's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit Arrests New Orleans Woman For Submitting False Time Sheets And Service Logs**

Attorney General James D. “Buddy” Caldwell announced today that a New Orleans woman has been charged with two counts of Medicaid fraud.

Natrell Shelton, 37, of 6345 Dwyer Road, is accused of submitting false time sheets and service logs indicating she was caring for a Medicaid recipient at the same time she was reportedly providing personal care services to another Medicaid recipient. As a result of her actions, the Medicaid Program was improperly billed $3,407.84. Shelton was arrested Tuesday and booked into the East Baton Rouge Parish Prison.

[https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=1082&catID=2](https://www.ag.state.la.us/Article.aspx?articleID=1082&catID=2)
MASSACHUSETTS
August 03, 2015

Attorney General Maura Healey Announces Pediatric Services Company Pays More Than $2.7 Million To Resolve Overpayment And Overcharging Claims

Georgia-based MassHealth Provider to Pay More than $82,000 to Massachusetts for Knowingly Submitting False Claims for Home Nursing Services

A provider of home nursing services for severely disabled children has agreed to pay over $2.7 million to settle allegations that it failed to return overpayments it received from state Medicaid programs and federally-insured health programs, and overcharged for home nursing services, Attorney General Maura Healey announced today.

The settlement with Georgia-based company, Pediatric Services of America, Inc., (PSA), was joined by 19 other states and the federal government to resolve civil allegations that the company unlawfully withheld overpayments and overcharged for nursing services by improperly rounding-up claims to the nearest whole hour.


NEVADA
August 10, 2015

Attorney General Laxalt Announces Sentencing Of Las Vegas Man For Submission Of False Medicaid Claims

Nevada Attorney General Adam Paul Laxalt announced that Nathanial Davis, 39, of Las Vegas, was sentenced for Medicaid fraud, a category “D” felony. The fraud was committed between October 2011 and October 2013.

Eighth Judicial District Court Judge David Barker sentenced Davis to 12-48 months in prison on a felony charge of submission of false Medicaid claims, suspended the sentence, and placed him on probation for five years. As part of his sentence, the judge ordered Davis to pay more than $17,000 in restitution, and perform 100 hours of community service.
NEW YORK
August 26, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Arrest Of Nurse Who Allegedly Stole $3k From Medicaid

Carolyn Calderaro Allegedly Submitted False Claims to Medicaid for Services Not Provided, Received Over $3K in Payments

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced the arrest of Carolyn Calderaro, 50, a Registered Nurse (RN) from Chazy, on charges that she submitted false claims to Medicaid claiming she provided in-home care to a Medicaid recipient on life support when she did not provide said services and, as a result, received over three thousand dollars ($3,000.00) in Medicaid payments.

Carolyn Calderaro was employed as a private duty nurse providing care to a 25-year-old Medicaid recipient on life support in the recipient’s home. The felony complaint alleges that from on or about July through December 2012, Calderaro submitted twelve (12) claims to Medicaid, each claim containing multiple dates of service, stating that she provided private duty nursing care to the recipient which she did not actually provide. Medicaid paid Calderaro for all of her claims.


August 24, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces $6 Million Medicaid Settlement With Brooklyn Home Care Agency

Settlement Resolves Claims Of Improper Reporting Of Home Health Aide Hours And Administrative Costs

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a $6 million dollar settlement with Empire State Home Care Services, Inc. (Empire), a home care
agency operating out of Brooklyn, NY. The settlement resolves claims that Empire improperly reported its home health aide hours as well as administrative and general expenses on cost reports filed between 2002 and 2005. These cost reports were used to set the reimbursement rates that Empire received from the state for the years 2004 through 2007 and resulted in over $3 million in reimbursements to which Empire was not entitled.

The audit revealed that Empire reported the salaries and benefits of administrative personnel under direct care cost centers, rather than administrative and general cost centers. By improperly placing these costs in direct care cost centers, Empire received inflated Medicaid reimbursement rates during the audit period. The settlement stipulates that Empire will pay $6 million to the state, including penalties on top of the just over $3 million that was improperly reimbursed.


August 24, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces $8 Million In Settlements With Specialcare Hospital Management Corp. And Hospitals In Yonkers, Kingston And Hudson For Defrauding Medicaid

OAG Joint Investigation With U.S. Attorney For The Eastern District Revealed That Yonkers, Kingston And Hudson Hospitals Billed Medicaid For Unlicensed And Unnecessary Detox Services

Yonkers And Hudson Hospitals Paid Illegal Kickbacks To SpecialCare For Referrals To Unlicensed Drug And Alcohol Treatment Program

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced that his office has secured settlement agreements with five defendants in a False Claims Act case that will return more than $8 million to the Medicaid and Medicare programs. The agreements resolve claims that SpecialCare Hospital Management Corporation defrauded Medicaid and Medicare by illegally referring patients to unlicensed drug and alcohol treatment programs at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Hudson, and St. Joseph’s Medical Center in Yonkers, in exchange for kickbacks. The Attorney General’s complaint alleges that SpecialCare Hospital Management Corporation, a for-profit out-of-state vendor, received the illegal kickbacks under the guise of providing purported
administrative services to the hospitals. It further alleges that SpecialCare’s illegal referrals caused the hospitals to provide those patients with unlicensed and medically unnecessary inpatient drug and alcohol treatment services, and submit false claims to Medicaid for those services, from approximately 2002 to 2006. The settlements also resolve claims that St. Joseph’s Medical Center, Columbia Memorial Hospital, and Benedictine Hospital in Kingston submitted false claims to Medicaid for unlicensed and medically unnecessary inpatient detoxification services. Benedictine Hospital changed its name to HealthAlliance Hospital Mary’s Avenue Campus on February 5, 2013. Under the terms of the four settlements, more than $7,367,000 will be returned to the Medicaid program, and $597,000 to the federal Medicare program.


OKLAHOMA
August 17, 2015

Attorney General Pruitt Charges Former Caretaker with Medicaid Fraud for Neglect

Attorney General Scott Pruitt on Monday announced Medicaid fraud charges against a former Warr Acres nursing home caretaker.

Kendra Leann Scott, 28, of Oklahoma City, was employed at Warr Acres Nursing Home as a long-term care aide. Scott, while working the day shift was responsible for caring for the well-being of a bed-bound resident. However, when a nurse aide on the evening shift checked on the resident she discovered the resident in bed with her clothing and bedding soiled with feces and urine for what appeared to be a long period of time.

When Scott was questioned about the condition of the resident, Scott allegedly told another staff member she knew no one cared or would check on the resident, so she neglected to care for her.

http://www.ok.gov/triton/modules/newsroom/newsroom_article.php?id=258&article_id=16533
August 13, 2015

**Attorney General Scott Pruitt Announces Medicaid Fraud Charges For Submission Of False Claims**

*Attorney General Scott Pruitt on Thursday announced Medicaid fraud charges in two separate cases.*

Shannon Jo Chew, 46, of Vinita, was employed concurrently by a provider in Vinita as well as Bartlesville when she would allegedly leave her first job early in order to make it to her second job on time. In doing this, Chew would falsify her time sheets for the first position so that it appeared she worked the entire shift. As a result of the fraudulent time sheets, Chew’s employer submitted false claims with the Oklahoma Health Care Authority in the amount of more than $1,000. Chew received more than $800 for hours she never provided.

Chew is being charged with one count of obtaining property by deception and one count of Medicaid fraud. If convicted, Chew faces up to two years in prison and fines of up to $1,500.

Shanea Octavia Nehmer, 35, of Oklahoma City, was employed by Options Unlimited when she is alleged to have used the identity of a child to generate false claims for counseling services. Nehmer fraudulently documented 21 counseling sessions at both the child’s school and home that never occurred. The fraudulently billed sessions cost the Oklahoma Health Care Authority more than $1,000.

Nehmer is charged with one count of identity theft and one count of Medicaid fraud. If convicted, Nehmer faces up to 11 years in prison and fines of up to $100,000.

**CONSUMER ADVOCACY**

**MULTISTATE ADVOCACY**
August 18, 2015

**Attorney General George Jepsen Joins Multistate Effort Supporting Victims of Predatory For-profit Schools**

_Eleven state attorneys general advocate for ease and clarity for students seeking to discharge loans after being victimized_

Attorney General George Jepsen today joined with 10 fellow attorneys general from around the country in calling on the U.S. Department of Education to cancel federal student loans in cases where Corinthian Colleges and other for-profit colleges and universities have broken state law, including laws prohibiting unfair and deceptive sales practices, and to provide clear processes for students seeking relief.

In a [letter](http://www.ct.gov/ag/cwp/view.asp?A=2341&Q=569636) sent to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and recently appointed Special Master Joseph Smith – who has been charged with reviewing the debts of students who attended Corinthian schools and establishing procedures for discharging their student loan debts – the attorneys general ask that they be included in the planning process, that students not be subjected to a burdensome or onerous process and that clarity be brought to the process to ensure that victims are not left with debts stemming from unfair and illegal practices.

**ALABAMA**
August 6, 2015

**Attorney General Luther Strange Joins With Electronic Security Board In Warning Consumers To Be Wary Of Unscrupulous Practices**

Attorney General Luther Strange joined with the Alabama Electronic Security Board of Licensure (AESBL) today in warning consumers to be cautious of unscrupulous solicitations and pressure tactics that may be used in an attempt to frighten people into buying or upgrading security products and services that may not be needed.
CALIFORNIA
August 19, 2015

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Issues Consumer Alert on Student Loan Debt Consolidation Scams

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today issued a consumer alert to Californians based on an increased number of complaints regarding student loan debt consolidation scams received by the Attorney General’s Public Inquiry Unit. Often times purporting to offer “student debt management” or “student loan consolidation” plans, private companies are charging borrowers upfront or monthly fees for FREE federal loan benefits. These companies may claim that they have a special relationship with the Department of Education or that a special governmental loan consolidation will be ending soon and will urge students to use their services in obtaining student loan consolidation or relief. Many times these companies will charge an initial application fee as well as a monthly service fee.


CONNECTICUT
August 6, 2015

Attorney General George Jepsen and State Warns Businesses About “Official” Reporting Scam

Department of Consumer Protection Commissioner Jonathan A. Harris, Secretary of the State Denise Merrill and Attorney General George Jepsen are warning businesses across Connecticut about bogus forms being sent by the “Division of Corporate Services” seeking payment for an “Annual Records Statement,” alleging that payment is required by Connecticut law. Click here to view a copy of the fraudulent form.

DELAWARE
August 7, 2015

Attorney General Matt Denn Announces Internet Privacy and Safety Agenda Becomes Law With Governor’s Signature

Governor Jack Markell signed four pieces of legislation into law Friday, giving Delawareans, especially children, enhanced privacy and protection for their online activities. The Delaware General Assembly passed the four-part Internet privacy and safety package proposed by Attorney General Matt Denn and a bipartisan group of legislators earlier this year.

The bills prevent educational technology service providers from selling or improperly disclosing the personal data of Delaware schoolchildren, or using it to send targeted advertising to students or their families; prevent companies from advertising inappropriate products on websites and mobile apps directed to children; prevent employers from inappropriately demanding access to the social media accounts of employees or job applicants; require websites to clearly disclose how they are using the personal data they collect about website users; restrict the ability of companies to disclose the reading habits of e-book readers; and prevent the location of crime victims and witnesses whose addresses have been changed for their protection from being disclosed on the internet.


IDAHO
August 10, 2015

Attorney General Lawrence Wasden Releases 2015 Fiscal Year Report for Consumer Protection Division

Idaho Attorney General Lawrence Wasden says his Consumer Protection Division recovered more than $24 million in penalties and costs from consumer-related enforcement actions during fiscal year 2015.

The division also recovered more than $1 million in restitution for consumers and successfully defended another year’s worth of Idaho’s tobacco Master Settlement Agreement payments, according to the Attorney General’s annual Consumer Protection Division report.
The report, released Monday, highlights the legal victories fought on behalf of consumers during the last fiscal year, from the decision by a federal appeals court affirming that St. Luke’s Health System violated state competition laws when it purchased Saltzer Medical Group to recovering financial losses suffered by consumers from Coeur d'Alene to Blackfoot.


**ILLINOIS**

August 6, 2015

**Attorney General Lisa Madigan Alerts Champaign Area To Home Repair Scams**

*Attorney General Warns Champaign-Urbana Residents of Driveway Paving Scam*

Attorney General Lisa Madigan today issued an alert after receiving reports of con artists traveling in the Champaign-Urbana area scamming homeowners out of thousands of dollars for shoddy asphalt-paving services.

Madigan's office has received reports of con artists traveling the area door-to-door soliciting work to pave driveways. The scammers intimidate homeowners, oftentimes seniors, and demand that they pay large sums of money up front without providing cost estimates. Such solicitors will often claim to have leftover materials from a nearby job, and offer a low or “discounted” price per square foot or yard, but will refuse to provide a total price estimate in advance. At the end of the job, these scammers claim to have used more material than anticipated and demand exorbitant amounts that far exceed the value of the work completed.

http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/pressroom/2015_08/20150806.html
KENTUCKY
August 3, 2015

Attorney General Conway Warns of IRS Phone Scam

Attorney General Jack Conway is warning Kentuckians to protect themselves from fraud and be vigilant of phone scams claiming to be associated with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Recently, Attorney General Conway’s Office of Consumer Protection has received calls from consumers who report that they have been contacted by scammers identifying themselves as IRS representatives or “officers.” The scammers are reportedly telling victims they owe money to the IRS. The scammers are also leaving voice messages stating that the victim must take care of a “time-sensitive matter” and return the call, or the IRS will take legal action against the victim.

http://migration.kentucky.gov/Newsroom/ag/irsphone.htm

MARYLAND
August 13, 2015

Attorney General Frosh: Marylanders Recover $11.9 Million with Help of Consumer Protection Division

Mediators, volunteer advocates assisted more than 9,000 Marylanders resolve disputes with businesses, health insurers and others in fiscal 2015

Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today announced that the Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division assisted more than 9,000 Marylanders who filed complaints during the most recent fiscal year, reclaiming $11.9 million for them.

Attorney General Frosh made the announcement of Fiscal Year 2015 recoveries during a visit to the Salisbury office of the Consumer Protection Division. The $11.9 million figure represents a significant increase over Fiscal Year 2014, when the Division recouped $8.7 million for consumers.

http://www.oag.state.md.us/Press/2015/081315.html
MASSACHUSETTS
August 20, 2015

Attorney General Maura Healey Secures Decrease in Proposed Rates for Columbia Gas Customers

Agreement Saves Ratepayers $13 Million, Provides Funding for Middle-Income Residents, Prohibits Company from Imposing New Rate Increases for Three Years

Attorney General Maura Healey has negotiated an agreement with Bay State Gas Company d/b/a Columbia Gas of Massachusetts (Columbia Gas) that reduces the Company’s proposed rate increase by over $13 million, prevents it from imposing any other distribution rate increases for three years and provides $250,000 in funding to help moderate income residents in need pay their gas bills.

The settlement, filed with the Department of Public Utilities yesterday, resolves a proceeding before state regulators where Columbia Gas sought to hike distribution rates by $49.7 million. The Attorney General’s Office was able to lower the increase to $36 million, saving ratepayers more than $13 million. Columbia Gas also is prohibited from imposing another distribution rate hike prior to November 2018. Without this agreement, Columbia could request another rate hike within the next year.


MISSISSIPPI
August 20, 2015

Attorney General Jim Hood Warns Consumers to Beware of Illegal and Mislabeled Diet Pills

Attorney General Jim Hood warns Mississippians today to be aware of fake diet pills that are illegally being advertised and distributed over the internet.

A recent federal multi-state investigation showed that diet pills containing sibutramine, a Schedule IV controlled substance, have been falsely labeled and marketed as “all natural” dietary supplements with herbal ingredients. The Mississippi Attorney General’s Office assisted in this investigation.
Sibutramine is the active pharmaceutical ingredient in Meridia, a prescription weight loss drug removed from the market in 2010 following studies that showed significantly increased risk of strokes and heart attacks. Since the removal of Meridia, no drug containing sibutramine has been approved for use in humans in the United States. This dietary supplement, imported from manufacturers based in China, has been sold under various names, such as “Slim Forte Slimming Capsules,” “Slim Forte Double Power Slimming Capsules,” “Slim-Vie Slimming Capsules,” and “Slim-Vie Double Power Slimming Capsules.”


MONTANA
August 24, 2015

Attorney General Tim Fox and The Montana Department of Justice Warns Consumers of Deceptive Vehicle Warranty Notices

Attorney General Tim Fox and the Montana Department of Justice want to make Montanans aware of deceptive vehicle service contract “notices” that claim to be issued from the “Motor Vehicle Division” that may be appearing in consumers’ mail boxes.

The notices can also appear to be coming from the car dealer or vehicle manufacturer, and may suggest that a previously purchased warranty has or is set to expire, even if no such warranty was purchased. The notice, which usually demands an immediate response on the part of the recipient, sometimes contains the year and model of the recipient’s vehicle. Additionally, the envelopes which contain these notices include warnings similar to those placed on some official government mailings.

NEW JERSEY

August 4, 2015

Acting Attorney General John J. Hoffman Announces New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs Cites 89 Home Improvement Contractors for $631,000 in Consumer Restitution and Civil Penalties in Second Quarter of 2015

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs announced today that, during the second quarter of 2015, it has issued Notices of Violation to 89 contractors, seeking $630,556.42 in consumer restitution and civil penalties.

Of the contractors cited during the second quarter of this year, 40 allegedly violated New Jersey law by acting as unregistered contractors. To become registered, a contractor must disclose the physical location of the business and provide proof of a minimum of $500,000 in liability insurance, among other requirements. The majority of the unregistered contractors were also the subject of consumer complaints; the Division has ordered them to pay consumer restitution ranging from $200 to $35,905.

http://nj.gov/oag/newsreleases15/pr20150804b.html

NEW YORK

August 20, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Announces Targeted Advertising Campaign To Help New York Homeowners Avoid Foreclosure Rescue Scams

Ads Promote AGScamHelp.com, A Web-Based App that Educates Consumers On How To Avoid And Report Mortgage Rescue Scams And Obtain Help From Trustworthy Organizations

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman today announced a targeted advertising campaign and consumer education initiative to help New York homeowners spot, avoid, and report mortgage rescue scams. Mortgage rescue scams prey on homeowners who are in foreclosure or at-risk of foreclosure. Typically, the scammers will provide what seems like a lifeline out of foreclosure, but then will bilk the homeowner while providing little or no help.
The advertisements will target homeowners in areas of the region hardest-hit by these scams, appearing on Billboards and in Facebook ads, particularly in ZIP codes that have reported these types of scams most frequently. The ads will direct homeowners to AGScamHelp.com where homeowners can find access to the Homeowner Protection Program (HOPP)- a network of almost 90 housing counseling and legal service agencies funded by the Attorney General to provide free services to homeowners facing foreclosure. Schneiderman launched the web based app in December of 2014 in response to an uptick in complaints from lawyers and housing counselors about the prevalence of mortgage rescues scams.


August 13, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Releases New Three-Year Report Highlighting Success Of His Statewide Foreclosure Prevention And Relief Programs

Attorney General’s Foreclosure Prevention And Relief Programs Have Helped 50,000 New York Families Fight To Keep Their Homes Since 2012

More Than 6,000 Families in the Southern Tier and Central New York Have Received Mortgage Assistance or Housing Counseling From A.G.-Funded Programs

Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman, joined by housing advocates, local lawmakers, and a local homeowner, today released a new, three-year report detailing the results of his office’s recent efforts to prevent foreclosures, keep families in their homes, and rebuild communities hit hardest by the housing crash. The three programs outlined in the report—the Homeowner Protection Program, New York State Mortgage Assistance Program, and AGScamHelp.com—have helped tens of thousands of New York families, including more than 6,000 homeowners in the Southern Tier and Central New York, avoid foreclosure. The programs are funded by more than $100 million from the settlements that Attorney General Schneiderman negotiated with the nation’s largest banks following the collapse of the housing market.

NEW YORK CONT’D

August 6, 2015

A.G. Schneiderman Cautions Watertown Area Landlords About Servicemembers’ Rights In Wake Of Fort Drum Deployment

Servicemembers Civil Relief Act Protects Deployed Servicemembers From Being The Target Of Penalties And Fees From Landlords

Attorney General Eric Schneiderman today cautions Watertown-area landlords of the legal protections afforded to servicemembers in the wake of the latest Fort Drum deployments. The deployment will result in 2,500 area servicemen and women being deployed overseas. Attorney General Schneiderman reminds area landlords to observe the letter and spirit of the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (“SCRA”), particularly where it relates to rental property leases to servicemembers.


PENNSYLVANIA

August 19, 2015

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane Issues Consumer Advisory: Be cautious when shopping for a car at salvage yards

Attorney General Kathleen G. Kane today urged Commonwealth residents to be cautious when considering the purchase of a motor vehicle from salvage yards or automobile repair businesses.

These businesses are often where consumers find cheap vehicles advertised for sale. General Kane said it is important to note that these vehicles in some cases hold a salvage title, which means an insurance company deemed the cost to repair the vehicle approached — or exceeded — the vehicle’s actual value.

https://www.attorneygeneral.gov/Media_and_Resources/Press_Releases/Press_Release/?pid=2036
VERMONT
August 28, 2015

Attorney General William H. Sorrell Issues Consumer Advisory Regarding Chittenden County Jury Duty Scam

The Chittenden County Sheriff’s Department and the Vermont Attorney General’s Office are warning consumers about a jury duty telephone scam. Many consumers in Chittenden County have reported receiving calls from a person claiming to be a Deputy Sheriff with the Civil Division of the Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office or an Elected Official in the Vermont court system; names of actual local deputies or local elected officials are being used in the calls.

This is not a call from law enforcement; it is a scam call.

The caller claims that the consumer has missed jury duty, that an arrest warrant has been issued, and that the consumer must pay a several hundred dollar fine via wire transfer or a prepaid money card or face arrest. The scam callers direct the consumer to go to a local pharmacy or store to buy the debit card or wire the money (using MoneyGram or Western Union).

The caller may leave a message with a call back number. That number is linked to a recorded message saying it is the office of the Civil Division of the Chittenden County Sheriff’s Office. This recording is part of the scam.

WEST VIRGINIA
August 27, 2015

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey Alerts Consumers To Watch Out For Solicitations From Out-Of-State Pharmacies

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey today alerted consumers to be on the lookout for out-of-state pharmacies sending unsolicited order forms, medical supplies or medications to insurance customers without their consent.

The Office’s Consumer Protection Division has received several reports of local consumers receiving what appear to be order forms for medical supplies and prescriptions from out-of-state pharmacies. Consumers and medical providers are also receiving supplies and prescriptions from these pharmacies, even though they have not placed orders from these companies.

Many of these reports are from residents who are diabetic and frequently fill prescriptions for diabetes medications and testing supplies. The supposed order forms falsely claim that the Public Employees Insurance Agency and other insurance companies require the use of out-of-state pharmacies for these medications and supplies.

The Consumer Protection Division is currently looking into whether these solicitations and shipments are the result of a possible data breach or theft of customer prescription information.


August 24, 2015

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey Warns Consumers of United Nations and Government Grant Scam on Facebook

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey today urged West Virginians to be cautious if they receive a Facebook message from someone claiming to have a United Nations and Government grant available.

In this scam, a Facebook user will receive a message from someone that they believe is a Facebook friend. However, it is a scammer on the other end. The messages start by explaining the content of the grants and who they can be
awarded to. The scammer sends messages describing that they have a government grant available for “retired, working, widowed, and disabled people.”

The Attorney General’s Office was recently made aware of this scam after a Mingo County resident was scammed by someone posing on Facebook as former state Sen. Truman Chafin, D-Mingo. The consumer believed they had been contacted by Chafin about a United Nations and Government Grant available for people in the area.


August 18, 2015

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey Warns E-ZPass Email Scam Is Reappearing

Attorney General Patrick Morrisey is warning West Virginia drivers that an E-ZPass email phishing scam is reoccurring in the state.

The scam is once again popping up in states that contract with E-ZPass to allow motorists to pay tolls electronically on turnpikes and toll roads. The West Virginia Parkways Authority has received several calls about the scam in recent days.

In this phishing scam, E-ZPass customers receive emails from an account that appears to be affiliated with the company. The email claims the E-ZPass customer has “missed” or “unpaid” toll fees and asks them to click on a link to get more information and pay the fees. However, the email is a fraud.