



NEWS RELEASE

STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

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AG Nessel: Scammers Are Spoofing Health Department Phone Numbers Seeking Medicaid, Medicare Information *Incoming Calls Impact Local Response to COVID-19*

LANSING, MICH. Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is warning that scammers are spoofing phone numbers of at least one local public health department and calling residents to offer medication while asking for their Medicaid and Medicare numbers for billing purposes. Incoming calls to the local health department are then jamming up phonelines and delaying official business in responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Reports so far have been focused on the Ionia County Health Department. The Attorney General's office issued a [consumer alert making residents aware of the situation earlier today](#).

"Scammers will not hesitate to gain access to your private information, and false promises of medications will not be fulfilled," Nessel said. "As a result of this scam, the number of calls to local public health departments are also hindering their ability to respond to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Never provide any personal information over the phone unless you have first independently confirmed who you are talking to."

To seem more official, scammers often use a process known as "spoofing" – when a call appears to be coming from a legitimate government phone number. The caller may also sound professional and be very persuasive.

Anyone who receives a phone call they suspect to be a scam should hang up the phone. No one should give out personal information to an unsolicited caller.

Residents should also be aware of online coronavirus scams selling bogus products and providing false information on COVID-19 tests and treatments. These attempts to obtain the personal information of consumers may include emails or online posts pitching unreliable products, advice, fake tests and cures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Those who wish to make a report about potential scams, price-gouging and any other violation of the Michigan Consumer Protection Act can do so with the Attorney General's Consumer Protection team by [filing a complaint online](#) or by calling 877-765-8388.

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](#) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](#).

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