



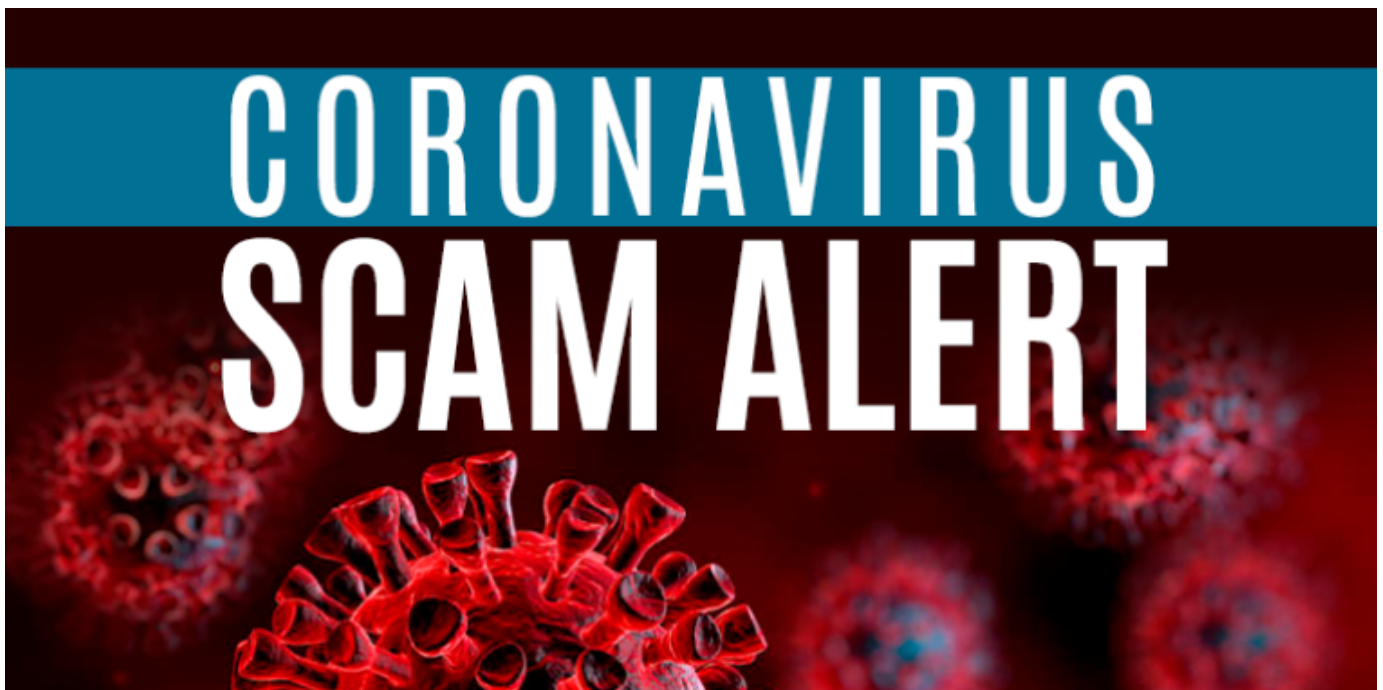
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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SCAM Alert – Don't Fall Prey to any Covid-19 Scams

FRED AKSHAR March 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **COVID-19, FRAUD PREVENTION**



During a time of turmoil, New Yorkers and Americans band together. Unfortunately, there are still those who look to prey upon the fears and vulnerabilities of our citizens.

Yesterday, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a fraud alert specific to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Scammers are offering fake COVID-19 tests to Medicare recipients in exchange for their personal information. From there, these scammers use this personal information as part of a broader identity theft scam.

HHS warns that these scam artists are using social media, telemarketing calls and even door-to-door visits to lure vulnerable New Yorkers into their traps. This behavior is truly unconscionable, but there are some steps to try to avoid falling victim to this scheme.

- DO NOT TRUST ANY unexpected calls or visitors offering coronavirus tests or supplies;
- IGNORE ANY AND ALL offers or advertisements for coronavirus testing or treatments on social media;
- ONLY a physician or trusted health care provider should assess your condition and approve requests for COVID-19 testing;
- BE CAUTIOUS AND SKEPTICAL OF ALL unsolicited requests for your Medicare or Medicaid numbers;
- IF YOU SUSPECT FRAUD, complaints related to COVID-19 should be reported to the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 1-866-720-5721 or e-mail at disaster@leo.gov. (The NCDF is a national coordinating agency within the Department of Justice's Criminal Division dedicated to improving the detection, prevention, investigation, and prosecution of criminal conduct related to natural and man-made disasters and other emergencies, such as the coronavirus. Hotline staff will obtain information regarding your complaint, which will then be reviewed by law enforcement officials.)

I know that these are challenging times. But by working together, staying well-informed, and maintaining vigilance, we will overcome the challenges we face.