



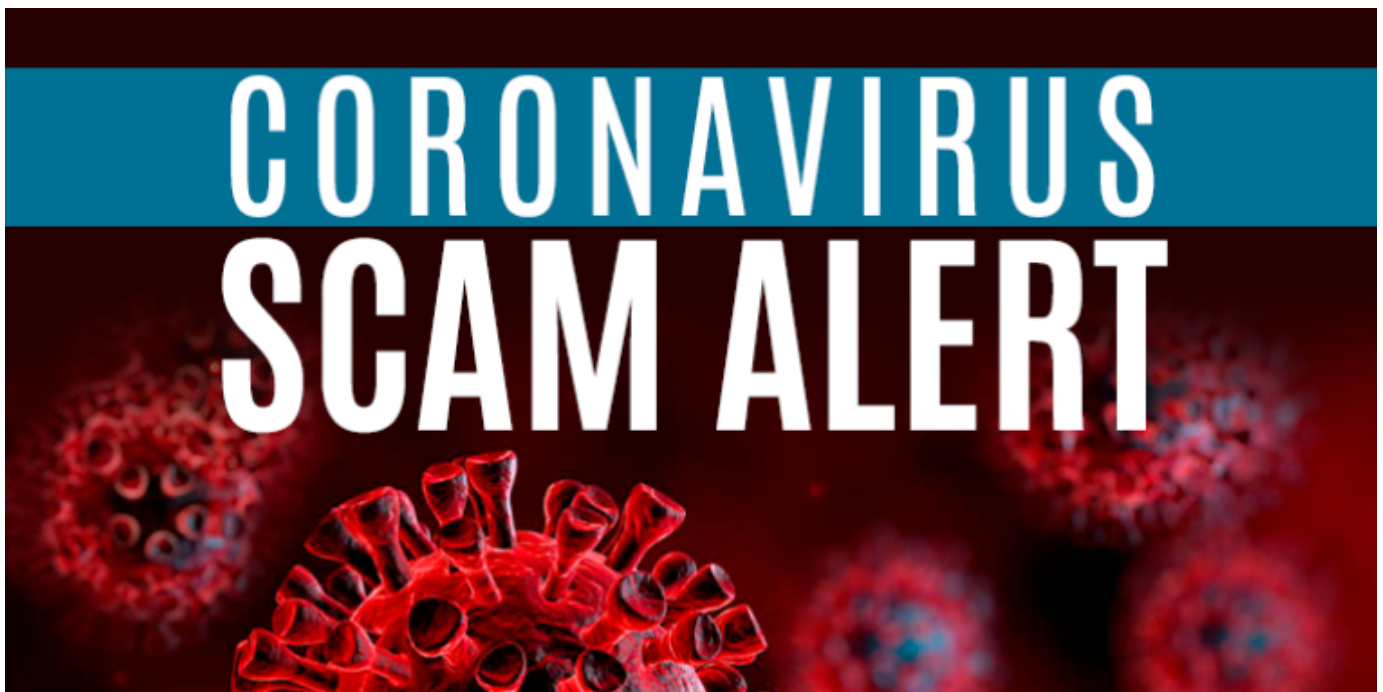
NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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COVID Scam Alert

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During times of uncertainty New Yorkers and Americans band together. People from every walk of life and every corner of our nation step up and do what they can to help their fellow citizens.

Unfortunately, there are still those who look to prey upon the fears and vulnerabilities of our citizens, especially seniors.

Please be advised that several fraud alerts specific to COVID-19 have been issued.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have issued an alert that 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 to drain the bank accounts of their victims.

The New York State Office of Aging has also issued an alert that scammers are offering grants for home repairs. Older adults are receiving postcards from the National Residential Improvement Association addressed to "resident" offering to help secure a grant for home repairs. **This is not a government program and the company does not currently have a business license.**

Here are some basic steps that can help you avoid these schemes:

- DO NOT TRUST ANY unexpected calls or visitors offering coronavirus tests, supplies, or grants;
- BE CAUTIOUS AND SKEPTICAL of all unsolicited requests of personal information over the telephone, like your Medicare number, Social Security number or banking information;
- IGNORE ANY AND ALL social media offers or advertisements for coronavirus testing or treatments or messages or posts from people excited to share the thousands of dollars they claim to have received from an organization that secures grants for homeowners;
- Remember that ONLY a physician or trusted health care provider should assess your condition and approve requests for COVID-19 testing;
- NEVER PAY a fee to a company that says it will help you get a grant;
- Only use local contractors with validated references to do work in your home.

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 New York State Attorney General's Office: 800-771-7755;
- The AARP Fraud Watch Network: 877-908-3360;
- The Better Business Bureau: <https://www.bbb.org/consumer-complaints/file-a-complaint/get-started>.

Additional information can be found here: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/stay-cyber-safe>.
More information regarding programs and resources can be found on my website at Helming.nysenate.gov.

Please know that I will continue to share information with you as it becomes available.

I urge you to pass this information onto anyone you think might find it useful.

I know that these are challenging times. But by working together, staying well-informed, and remaining vigilant, we will overcome these challenges.