

**For Immediate Release:**

March 19, 2020

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**SCAM ALERT: AG Balderas Issues COVID-19 Scam Alert and Safety Advisory to New Mexican Consumers**

*Santa Fe, NM* -- Today, Attorney General Hector Balderas issued a consumer safety advisory, warning New Mexican consumers of various scams related to the coronavirus outbreak. This advisory comes in the wake of many reports to the Office of the Attorney General of consumer price gouging and COVID-19 scams emerging in New Mexico.

"We must protect the health and safety of New Mexican families during this emergency, and that includes protecting them from fraud and abuse when they are most vulnerable," said Attorney General Balderas. "My office will prosecute anyone who breaks the law and takes advantage of vulnerable New Mexicans."

Attorney General Balderas encourages all consumers to be especially vigilant during this time and to be aware of the following:

- **COVID-19 HOTLINE SCAM** Please be aware there are several phishing scams where the caller impersonates a representative from the COVID-19 Hotline or other medical entity. The scammer is asking for personal information like social security and date of birth, telling callers they must have that information in order to release COVID-19 testing results. Remind the public that we will never ask for your social security number. Any confirmation of a positive COVID-19 swab test will be made by the clinic where you were seen or the New Mexico Department of Health.
- **GENERAL PHONE SCAMS** If anyone makes an empty promise that requires upfront payment, demands personal or financial information, or asks you to pay them with a gift card, this is likely a scam. Do your research. Please remember that real legal notices are sent in writing and are not communicated over the phone.
- **DOOR-TO-DOOR SCAMS** Recently, there have been reports of groups or individuals going door-to-door falsely claiming to be doing in-home testing for coronavirus. Some scammers may claim to be from the government or authorized by the government.
- **COVID-19 CURE SCAMS** There is no FDA-approved cure for coronavirus. Any company claiming that their product can prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure coronavirus without competent medical research supporting their claims is breaking the law. There is no credible evidence that coronavirus can be cured

by drinking bleach, drinking colloidal silver, taking herbal supplements, or using other homeopathic remedies. When in doubt, consult a medical professional.

- **IMPLIED CLAIMS SCAMS** In order to evade liability, some companies will merely imply that their products prevent, diagnose, treat, or cure coronavirus. Read claims carefully so you understand what is being promised and what is not
- **E-MAIL PHISHING SCAMS** Do not click on links sent to you by people you don't know. In the wake of disasters like the coronavirus outbreak, scammers will often email or text consumers claiming to offer things like free vaccines or free testing kits. Scammer will also attempt to collect personal information by impersonating a government agency like the Centers for Disease Control, the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and others. Never provide your personal information to someone you don't know.
- **FUNDRAISING SCAMS** If anyone asks you for a donation to a coronavirus-related charity, do your homework before donating. Visit the Attorney General's Charities webpage to search for legitimate charities (<https://www.nmag.gov/charities.aspx>) and do not donate to anyone asking for cash, gift cards, or for money to be sent to them via wire transfer.
- **GENERAL DISINFORMATION SPREADING** Know how to spot disinformation. Many websites will post misleading or inflammatory information about coronavirus in order to drive up page views and make money from advertisers. Here is a list of websites that have been reported for posting or publishing false information about the coronavirus outbreak: <https://www.newsquadtech.com/coronavirus-misinformation-tracking-center/>. For legitimate information, visit the State of New Mexico's comprehensive resource site ([newmexico.gov](http://newmexico.gov)); the CDC's website ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)); or the World Health Organization's website ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)).

Any New Mexican that is suspicious of price gouging or scamming activity is urged to immediately file a complaint with the Office of the Attorney General at [nmag.gov](http://nmag.gov).

Above all, Attorney General Balderas encourages New Mexicans to stay safe and follow the orders and guidance of the Department of Health during this public health emergency. Any New Mexican who has questions or needs resources during this emergency should visit [newmexico.gov](http://newmexico.gov) or call 1-833-551-0518; or if they suspect that they have, or have been exposed to, COVID-19 to immediately call the State's Health Hotline at 1-855-600-3453.

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