



## FEDERAL AGENCIES RESPOND TO HEALTH CARE FRAUD REGARDING CORONAVIRUS

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Federal agencies are taking action to help prevent the public from scammers and fraudsters trying to profit from people's fears and vulnerabilities regarding the coronavirus crisis. Sadly, certain bad actors are preying on Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries by offering COVID-19 tests and unapproved treatments in exchange for their personal information and details (e.g., Medicare and Medicaid numbers). Scammers can then use this information to fraudulently bill Federal health care programs or commit identity theft. Additionally, in some instances, beneficiaries may be left bearing the cost of the test if Medicare or Medicaid denies the claim. These fraudulent schemes have appeared through a variety of methods including marketing of fake COVID-19 test kits and unapproved treatments through telemarketing, social media platforms, and door-to-door visits. With an ongoing crisis and a large stimulus deal pending, fraudulent schemes arising out of COVID-19 are likely to continue.

Government agencies like the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General (OIG), Department of Justice (DOJ), and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have taken a strong stand against criminals exploiting the pandemic for their own benefit. The FDA has begun to actively and aggressively monitor the market for fraudulent COVID-19 products with diagnostic, prevention, and treatment claims. If fake or fraudulent tests are detected, the FDA will take action through warning letters, seizures or injunctions against companies and other bad actors. In addition to the FDA's enforcement, OIG released an alert warning the public to take steps to ensure they are receiving legitimate medical care. In particular, the OIG emphasized the importance of Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries protecting their personal information and details (e.g., Medicare and Medicaid numbers). The alert additionally provided steps that individuals can take to help prevent scammers from gaining access to their private information. The DOJ also plans to utilize every resource to act quickly against scammers regardless of whether they are defrauding consumers, committing identity theft, or delivering malware. U.S. Attorney General William Barr issued a statement directing U.S. Attorneys to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of fraud schemes related to the coronavirus. In order to help DOJ investigate and prosecute the fraud, Barr urged the public to take action by reporting all suspected fraud to the appropriate contact points. If you suspect COVID-19 fraud, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline (866) 720-5721 or [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov).

If you have any questions or concerns regarding potential COVID-19 related fraud, please contact a member of Hancock Daniel's [Healthcare Investigations and Enforcement Actions](#) team. For more information about the FDA effort to stop COVID-19, please visit this [website](#). More detailed information about the OIG alert and the safety precautions

beneficiaries should take can be found on this [website](#). Additional information about specific DOJ enforcement actions against scammers can be read [here](#).

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