

Statewide Leaders Issue Warning to Residents on Local Health Department Phone Scams

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Agency: Attorney General

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LANSING - After a recent uptick in phone scams targeting residents, Attorney General Dana Nessel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Director Robert Gordon and Michigan Association for Local Public Health Executive Director Meghan Swain are warning Michiganders about scammers posing as public health officials to steal personal information.

Several local health departments – including Bay, Jackson, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw counties – have received reports from residents about calls from individuals seeking personal information that could be used to steal someone's identity.

“Scammers use every tool they have to take advantage of anyone they can,” Nessel said. “It is important residents remember they should never give personal and confidential information to unsolicited callers. Simply hang up and report the call to our office.”

The callers claim to be from a local health department and appear to be calling from health department phone numbers, a practice that is commonly known as spoofing.

Anyone who receives one of those calls should hang up immediately. No one should give out personal information to an unsolicited caller.

“Local public health and Medicaid officials will never call you to request account information, Social Security numbers or passwords,” said Gordon. “Remain diligent about protecting your personal information and end the call immediately if you get this kind of inquiry over the phone.”

“We are concerned that spoofers are using a trusted community entity like the local health department to obtain personal information on residents for possible illegal activity,” Swain said. “Local health departments are aware of the issue and want to ensure the public that we would not ask for personal information over the phone. If there is a concern by an individual who has been spoofed, we encourage them to contact the local health department immediately to notify them of spoofing and to confirm if the department is attempting to contact them.”

Those who wish to make a report about these calls can do so by contacting the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division. A [complaint can be filed online](#) or by calling 877-765-8388.

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Health Department phone number spoofed

Ithaca, Stanton, St. Johns- The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) has learned that scammers have again been making phone calls using the Health Department's phone numbers. The scammers have been targeting MMDHD off and on since February.

The scammers claim to be with the Health Department or a Medicare representative. In both instances, the caller is asking for confidential, personal information. These calls are coming from scammers, not the Mid-Michigan District Health Department.

The scammers are using a technique called caller ID spoofing. They falsify information transmitted to your caller ID to hide their identity. They tend to use a local number or a number from a trusted business, to increase the likelihood that you'll answer the phone. In this case, they are using MMDHDs phone numbers (Clinton County: 989-224-2195, Gratiot County: 989-875-3681, Montcalm County: 989-831-5237). The Health Department's number shows up on your caller ID, but it's really a scammer on the line.

If you receive one of these calls, simply hang up. If you get a message on your answering machine, do not return the call. And most importantly, never give out personal information over the phone, such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, your mother's maiden name or passwords to an unsolicited caller or if you are at all suspicious.

Other tips to avoid becoming a victim of spoofing:

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers.
- If you answer the phone and you are asked to hit a button to stop getting the calls, hang up.
- Do not respond to any questions, especially those that can be answered with "yes" or "no."
- If you get a call from someone who says they represent a company or government agency, and you are suspicious, hang up and call the number in the phone book, or on the company's or agency's website.
- Use caution if you are pressured for information immediately.

*Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.
We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.
Advancing innovative solutions to achieve healthier outcomes*

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