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### PRESS RELEASE

### CORONAVIRUS-RELATED FRAUD

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Napa County District Attorney Allison Haley announced information for Napa County residents regarding Coronavirus-related fraud. While the District Attorney's Office investigates and prosecutes fraudulent practices, awareness and caution are the best protection for Napa County residents against scams. Listed below are fraudulent practices that are currently circulating around the country which attempt to take advantage of the fear and uncertainty surrounding the Coronavirus.

- Cures and Treatments – The FDA says there are no approved vaccines, drugs or other products currently available to treat or prevent Coronavirus. Yet several companies have advertised dietary supplements, teas, essential oils, and colloidal silver to treat or cure the virus. The FDA and FTC recently issued warning letters to seven companies that were advertising and selling such products.  
<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/03/ftc-fda-warnings-sent-sellers-scam-coronavirus-treatments>
- Checks from the Government – The federal and state governments are working on stimulus packages to cushion the economic impact from the Coronavirus. One possible form of relief being discussed is sending checks directly to individuals. Regardless of the form the relief takes, please remember that: (1) the government will not ask you to pay anything up front to get this money, (2) the government will not call to ask for your Social Security number, bank account, or credit card number, and (3) the government has not finalized any payment plan yet and anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is illegitimate.
- Phishing Emails Appearing to be from the CDC or WHO – be wary of emails claiming to be from the CDC, the WHO, or other similar public health agencies. It is unlikely that these organizations will email you directly with updates. And they certainly will not ask you for your personal information, such as your Social Security number, bank account numbers, or logins and passwords. The best place to find up-to-date information from these organizations is on their websites: CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>, WHO - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.
- Fake Charities – During a crisis, people often want to help out by donating to a charity. However, crises also bring out fake charity schemes. The FTC has advice on how to research

your chosen charity to make sure it is a legitimate organization.

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/how-donate-wisely-and-avoid-charity-scams>

Helpful information on Coronavirus and other consumer scams can be found on the FTC's website at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/> and the California Attorney General's website at <https://oag.ca.gov/consumers>. Anyone who has been the victim of fraud, or who has information regarding fraudulent activity, is encouraged to immediately file a complaint with the District Attorney's Office by going to our website (<https://www.countyofnapa.org/578/ConsumerEnvironmental-Protection-Unit>) or by calling (707) 253-4059.