



## SCAM ALERT: CORONAVIRUS INSPIRES SCAM ARTISTS TO TARGET CONSUMERS

*Agencies warn consumers to avoid imposter scams and claims of miracle medicines*

Tuesday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020 – The Departments of Consumer Protection (DCP), Public Health (DPH) and the Office of the Attorney General William Tong are warning consumers that scam artists are following the headlines and trying to take advantage of consumers' during heightened attention to coronavirus.

Scam artists may post, email, and text to promote false information about "cases" of the disease in your neighborhood that do not exist, and bogus prevention medication in order to obtain your personal information and your money. They also may ask you to donate to victims through a sham charity or offer "advice" about false treatments for the disease.

*To avoid these types of scams:*

- **Don't fall victim to click bate.** If you receive an email or text claiming to have news about coronavirus, do not open it, and get accurate information about any updates in Connecticut on DPH's website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or the [Centers for Disease Control's \(CDC\) website](http://www.cdc.gov)
- **Watch for imposter emails.** Look out for emails claiming to be the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) or the World Health Organization (WHO). If you're not already subscribed to receive emails from them, you won't get one out of nowhere.
- **Ignore online offers for vaccinations or miracle treatments.** If you see ads touting prevention, treatment, or cure claims for the coronavirus, ignore it. You won't hear about medical breakthroughs for the first time through an ad or sales pitch.
- **Do your homework when considering making donations.** Don't donate to any organization claiming to help those sick from the coronavirus unless you have done your research. Any charity soliciting in the State of Connecticut must be registered with DCP. You can verify their registration at [www.elicense.ct.gov](http://www.elicense.ct.gov).
- **Watch out for scam "investment opportunities".** The [U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission \(SEC\) has warned people](http://www.sec.gov) about online promotions, including on social media, claiming that the products or services of publicly-traded "companies" can prevent, detect, or cure coronavirus.

"Whenever a topic is of high interest to the news, and to consumers – scam artists take advantage of the opportunity to get your attention," said Consumer Protection Commissioner Michelle H. Seagull, "That becomes even more true when families are concerned about health risks. We want to encourage families to be more alert than usual, and to report any suspicious activity. Remember, the Department of Public Health is the most reputable place to find information about the coronavirus in the State of Connecticut."

“Scammers are always looking for new ways to profit off fear, and don’t let them. Check your facts by getting accurate information from a reputable source, like the Department of Public Health, CDC or WHO webpages. If you do receive a suspicious solicitation, including donations to victims or invitations to invest in miracle cures and vaccinations, we want to know about it,” said Attorney General Tong.

Any consumers who notice one of these scams or feel they have fallen victim to a scam should report it to DCP or the Office of the Attorney General as soon as they are able using the below contact information:

<b>Department</b>	<b>Complaint Webpage</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Consumer Protection	<a href="https://ct.gov/dcp/complaint">https://ct.gov/dcp/complaint</a>	(860) 713-6300
Office of the Attorney General	<a href="https://www.dir.ct.gov/ag/complaint">https://www.dir.ct.gov/ag/complaint</a>	(860) 808-5318

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