

Office of the Hunterdon County Prosecutor

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PHONE SCAMMERS POSE AS CONTACT TRACERS TO OBTAIN PERSONAL INFORMATION

Acting Hunterdon County Prosecutor Michael J. Williams and Acting Chief of Detectives Frank R. Crisologo would like to alert the public to a recent phone scam directed at residents in Hunterdon County.

According to Acting Prosecutor Williams, "We have received reports that residents have been getting phone calls from a person claiming to be from the Hunterdon County Department of Health. These scammers will identify themselves as contact tracers and then try to obtain personal information. It appears these perpetrators are "spoofing" the actual phone numbers of the Department of Health. Spoofing is when a caller deliberately falsifies the information transmitted to your caller ID display to disguise their identity. I want to remind the public to never give out personal information such as bank account number, Social Security number, or date of birth over the phone. We are actively investigating this crime and will advise the public as we receive more information."

UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 5, 2020

According to Acting Prosecutor Williams, "The Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office continues to investigate this matter. If anyone has information regarding this crime, please contact our office at (908) 788-1129. The following information is the protocol used by the health department for contact tracing."

When the health department calls, the nurse will identify themselves by name and as a nurse from the Health Department. If they are a confirmed case, the health department will have information regarding their current COVID diagnosis and ask them for names and phone numbers of those who were exposed to them during their infectious period. When nurse calls the close contacts, they will advise them of their exposure and the

recommendation to quarantine. The nurse will also provide them with information about COVID and what to do if they become symptomatic.

Please keep in mind that department of health employees never ask for an individual's social security number, immigration status, credit card or banking information. County health employees do not share any immigration information with federal law enforcement agencies, and getting tested or treated for COVID-19 will not impact an undocumented person's attempts at permanent U.S. residency.

Acting Prosecutor Williams added, "Contact tracing is vital to saving lives and stopping the spread of this deadly virus. It is understandable the recent information about these phone scams may be alarming, but it is still important to fully cooperate with health department officials."

Anonymous tips can be submitted by calling Crime Stoppers at 1-800-321-0010, going online at www.CrimeStoppersHunterdon.com, or through the free "P3 Tips" smartphone app. All tips are anonymous and kept confidential. Crime Stoppers pays cash rewards for valid tips.

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