For Immediate Release  
March 27, 2020

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT: The FBI’s New York Field Office Warns Healthcare Professionals of Increased Potential for Fraudulent Sales of COVID-Related Medical Equipment

Scammers continue to take advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to steal money through a variety of means. The FBI’s New York Field Office is warning the healthcare industry in particular of an increased potential for fraudulent activity dealing with the purchase of COVID-related medical equipment. Based on the current stress on the supply chain, scammers may promise equipment they do not have access to in order to capitalize on the medical community’s urgent needs. The FBI asks the medical community to exercise due diligence and appropriate caution when dealing with any vendors with whom they have never worked and/or of which they’ve never heard, and when relying on unidentified third-party brokers in the supply chain.

The FBI advises to be on the lookout for any suspicious activity, to include:

- Unusual payment terms, e.g., supplier asking for up-front payments or proof of payment;
- Last-minute price changes;
- Last-minute excuses for delay in shipment, e.g., claims that the equipment was seized at port or stuck in customs; or
- Unexplained source of bulk supply.

If you think you have information of suspicious activity by a vendor, or believe you were a victim of a scam, we urge you to call 1-800-CALL-FBI with information.

Additionally, the FBI urges everyone to be cautious of anyone selling products that claim to prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19. Be alert to counterfeit products like sanitizing products and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 respirator masks, goggles, full face shields, protective gowns, and gloves. More information on unapproved or counterfeit PPE can be found at www.cdc.gov/niosh. You can also find information on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website, www.fda.gov, and the Environmental Protection Agency website, www.epa.gov. Counterfeit products can be reported to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov and to the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center at iprcenter.gov.

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