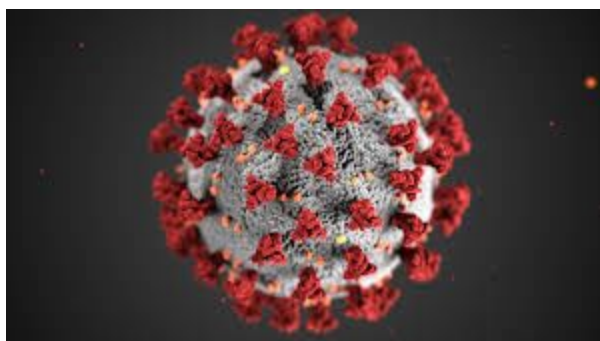


U.S. Attorney's Office takes steps to maintain mission amidst COVID-19 public health emergency

March 21, 2020



U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams announced Wednesday, March 18, a series of steps aimed at protecting consumer financial safety and preventing civil rights violations amidst the coronavirus outbreak.

U.S. Attorney Williams has appointed COVID-19 fraud and civil rights coordinators to lead investigations into known and suspected occurrences of consumer financial fraud and civil rights violations resulting from the nation's ongoing public health emergency.

"We are aware of instances of consumer fraud and civil rights violations stemming from the COVID-19 public health emergency," said U.S. Attorney Williams. "While Americans work to protect themselves and their loved ones from the threat of COVID-19, some individuals are actively trying to profit off of this emergency. Equally concerning," Williams continued, "we have received reports of alleged civil rights violations stemming from the false belief that certain groups of people are more susceptible to carrying or contracting the virus based on their real or perceived race, ethnicity, employment or other demographic characteristics."

If you or someone you know believe you've been the target or victim of an outbreak-related fraud scheme, please contact the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) by visiting www.IC3.gov. Crime tips of any kind, including alleged civil rights violations, can be submitted by visiting tips.fbi.gov or calling the FBI Portland Field Office at 503-224-4181. If you or someone you know are in immediate danger, please call 911.

The U.S. Attorney's Office COVID-19 fraud and civil rights coordinators will be notified of tips submitted via any of the above reporting methods.

On March 13, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Marco A. Hernandez issued Standing Order 2020-4, Court Operations in Response to COVID-19. Under the order, most district court proceedings are continued or will be resolved via telephone or video conference. Case-by-case exceptions to this guidance will be considered by the applicable presiding judge after consultation with counsel. The court's standing order will remain in effect until vacated or amended.

The U.S. Attorney's Office has taken necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of its staff during this health emergency while continuing to fulfill its public safety mission. Essential law enforcement functions including investigations, the signing and execution of warrants, filing of charges, and case litigation will continue. District of Oregon prosecutors and support staff will continue working with federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement partners to safeguard our justice system and protect the safety and security of our nation during this difficult time.

"We are immensely grateful for the many public health and medical professionals and first responders on the front lines of protecting our communities from the novel coronavirus," said U.S. Attorney Williams, "During this time of uncertainty and fear, it is more important than ever that all Americans look out for one another, act out of compassion and generosity, and look for opportunities to help their neighbors. Likewise, federal law enforcement will continue doing our part to keep our communities safe."