



NEWS RELEASE

Mary Brumage
Public Information Officer
(970) 522-3741 x1257
maryb@nchd.org

August 11, 2020

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Contact Tracing Scams

Sterling, Colo. – August 11, 2020: You have probably heard a lot about contact tracing, which is the process the Northeast Colorado Health Department (NCHD) uses to contact people that have tested positive or been exposed to someone with COVID-19, instructing them to quarantine or isolate and monitor their symptoms daily. However it has come to our attention that scammers, claiming to be employees of the health department are either texting or calling residents asking for personal information or money.

“We have heard from the public that scammers are calling people saying they are from the health department trying to get people's private financial information and/or requesting money for their test results,” stated Trish McClain, Director of NCHD. “This is very concerning and I want to make sure the public is aware that we would never ask for money, their financial information or social security information.”

Case investigation and contact tracing for Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington and Yuma counties are conducted by NCHD employees who are listed in our full staff directory located at <https://www.nchd.org/contact>. For NCHD, case investigations start with a phone call to patients who have recently been tested positive for COVID-19. The investigator will discuss who they may have been interacting with recently, help with isolation plans for themselves and resources they may need while in quarantine. Individual information is not shared and all information collected during interviews is used only to track the spread of the disease.

Interviewers operate under strict confidentiality rules and collected data is protected in secure systems. Investigators will need names and phone numbers for those people who are identified as close contacts while the patient was possibly infectious, but they will never ask for personal information like immigration status, marital status, Social Security, bank account, or credit card information. Anyone who does, is a scammer.

Mike Burnet, NCHD 's Response Coordination Officer remarks "Contact tracing plays a vital role in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Scammers, pretending to be investigators, are taking advantage of that system, damaging our reputation and the trust of our community."

These scams are both texting spam messages that ask to click a link, or by a phone call where the person asks for money to pay for testing. NCHD is not currently contacting anyone by text messaging. Legitimate calls received from authorized tracers will not ask for payment or personal financial information over the phone. If you are unsure about a text or phone call, please contact NCHD at one of your local offices:

Logan County

700 Columbine Street
Sterling, CO 80751
Phone: (970) 522-3741

Morgan County

228 W. Railroad Avenue
Fort Morgan, CO 80701
Phone: (970) 867-4918
Fax: (970) 867-0878

Phillips County

127 E. Denver Street, Suite C
Holyoke, CO 80734
Phone: (970) 854-2717

Sedgwick County

118 W. 3rd Street
Julesburg, CO 80737

Phone: (970) 474-2619

Washington County

482 Adams Avenue

Akron, CO 80720

Phone: (970) 345-6562

Yuma County

529 N. Albany Street, Suite 1120

Yuma, CO 80759

Phone: (970) 848-3811

###