

## **STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WARNS OF PHISHING SCAM TARGETING LICENSED PROFESSIONALS**

The New York State Education Department today is warning licensed professionals in New York State about a scam involving telephone calls from individuals posing as NYSED Employees or law enforcement officials to defraud and extort victims. The scam is targeting such licensed professionals as physicians and pharmacists, and is seeking the professional's social security number and an immediate bond payment under the guise that the professional's license has been suspended and payment is required to reverse the suspension and avoid further charges. The New York State Education Department will never telephone or fax any individual to request a bond fee or payments related to an ongoing investigation of professional misconduct. If you receive such a phone call, please hang up immediately and report it to the proper law enforcement authorities.

"It is truly unspeakable that during the challenges of this pandemic there are individuals intentionally seeking to defraud the nurses, pharmacists and other professionals who have been heroes through all of this," said Chancellor Lester W. Young, Jr. "I encourage anyone that receives a suspicious call to immediately contact the FBI and your local law enforcement officials to report the incident. Thank you all for everything you have done throughout the pandemic."

"The commitment of our front-line workers and licensed professionals to their fellow New Yorkers has been unwavering throughout the pandemic, which is why this scam is so reprehensible," said Commissioner Betty A. Rosa. "We will work with our partners in law enforcement in any way possible to ensure those responsible for this scam are brought to justice. New Yorkers should be aware that the Department will not telephone any licensed professional to seek a bond fee at any time and should report any such call immediately."

The police and impacted licensees have reported to the Department that the phishing scam involves a phone call from an individual claiming to represent New York State stating that the professional's license has been temporarily suspended and in order to have their license reinstated, they must pay a bond fee via bank wire transfer, which would be refunded to them if they were cleared by an investigation. Using phone "spoofing" technology, the phone calls and faxes appeared to come from real government agencies. Numerous pages of official looking documents that appear to be from New York State, the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI, Trans Union and the New York State Office of Professions are then sent to these licensed professionals which contain publicly available information including their license number, National Provider Identifier (NPI) number, name, address, and other personal information. To complete the documentation, licensed professionals are asked to complete a box in which their social security number is requested.

If you have lost money in such a scam, immediately notify your bank and file a report with the FBI at [Internet Crime Complaint Center\(IC3\) | Home Page](#). This must be done

quickly, usually in less than 72 hours, for even a very slight chance of recovering any money sent by bank wire transfer. You should also file a report with your local police precinct. Additionally, notify the Federal Trade Commission and visit [Identity Theft Recovery Steps | IdentityTheft.gov](#) to learn how to mitigate your chances of becoming a victim of identity theft.

Should you wish to check the status of your current registration and ability to practice, please do so using the OP Website found here: [NYS Professions - Online Verifications \(nysed.gov\)](#)