

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 31, 2017

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Health Department Warns of Phone Call Scam **Seeking Personal Information**

Callers use caller ID spoofing technology to appear to call from credible sources

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is warning of a phone scam where callers posing as health department staff are asking for personal information that the department would never seek over the phone. The callers use caller ID spoofing technology to make it appear that they are calling from a credible phone number, including from ODH and at least one Ohio local health department.

In addition to posing as ODH staff, some callers have said that they are calling on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or a hospital or other healthcare provider.

The callers often have some personal information about the individuals they are calling, such as name, date of birth, address and the name of the person's physician.

Here are some tips to avoid becoming a victim of a phone scam:

- If you get an inquiry from someone who says they represent a company or a government agency seeking personal information, hang up and find a phone number on the company's or government agency's website to call to verify the authenticity of the request.
- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother's maiden name, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.
- Use caution if you are being pressured for information immediately.
- You can block the caller's phone number to try to prevent follow up calls – although the caller may call back from a different phone number.
- File a complaint online with the Federal Trade Commission at www.FTC.gov/complaint.

Since this scam includes caller ID spoofing of a state agency, the Ohio Highway Patrol is investigating these calls.

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