Date March 05, 2021

Attorney General Moody's Week In Review - March 5, 2021



This week is National Consumer Protection Week, a time to highlight our successes in fighting consumer fraud and provide resources to help Floridians avoid scams. COVID-19 has changed so much about our daily routines and provided more ways for scammers to target Floridians. As scams evolve, so must the approach we take in avoiding them.

There are several key steps you can take to better protect your finances and sensitive information in the age of COVID-19, including:

- Seek information from trusted sources, such as county health departments or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Avoid too-good-to-be-true offers or promotions;
- Never respond to solicitations, whether they appear online, come through the mail or via your cellphone; and
- Pay with a credit card if possible, especially when making purchases online. Credit card companies often provide extra customer protection measures.

These are just a few ways you can prevent falling victim to fraud during National Consumer Protection Week and beyond. For more information on how to protect

yourself, visit our Scams at a Glance page at MyFloridaLegal.com/ScamsAtAGlance.

If you do fall victim to a scam or see something suspicious, report it to my office by calling 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or by visiting MyFloridaLegal.com.

By developing smart consumer habits and alerting my office to scams, you can help us build a Stronger, Safer Florida.



In The News

Ashley Moody: Since 2019, Consumer Protection Division Has Secured More Than $260 Million for Floridians, Florida Daily

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AG Moody Recovers Millions of Dollars for FL Consumers in Anti-Fraud Campaign, The Floridian

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AG Moody targets scammers, Gulf Breeze News

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Companion bills aimed at protecting police K-9s injured in the line of duty introduced in Florida, CBS 10 Tampa Bay

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Attorney General in Daytona Beach highlighting emergency care for K9s legislation, Click Orlando

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Legislation to strengthen protections for seniors, Hometown News Brevard

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Bill would protect seniors from financial exploitation, The Gainesville Sun

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Protecting Floridians



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General Ashley Moody, a staunch supporter of Florida law enforcement, is highlighting legislation aimed at protecting police K-9s injured in the line of duty. Currently, paramedics and emergency medical technicians are not permitted to provide life-saving emergency medical care or transportation to police K-9s injured in the line of duty. Bill sponsor Sen. Tom Wright today joined the Attorney General's news conference urging passage of the life-saving legislation.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Law enforcement officers put their lives on the line daily to serve their communities and protect our safety—and their four-legged partners risk their lives protecting them. Police K-9s regularly provide life-saving services, including suspect apprehension, detection and search-and-rescue missions that lead to the arrest of dangerous criminals and the safe return of missing persons. It is a dangerous job for officers and K-9s, and both are often subject to great bodily harm.

"As Attorney General, I am dedicated to providing the best means of protection for all our law enforcement officers, including police K-9s. I am so grateful to Senator Wright and Representative Killebrew for sponsoring bills that will increase the ability

of paramedics and EMTs to provide life-saving care and transportation to K-9 police dogs. They dedicate their lives to providing safety to our communities, we must do the same for them." Read More

VIDEO: Attorney General Moody Highlights Two-Year Anniversary of Consumer Alert Program



Attorney General Ashley Moody is recognizing the second anniversary of Florida's Consumer Alert program for National Consumer Protection Week. Attorney General Moody launched the Consumer Alert program in 2019 to warn Floridians of emerging scams and provide resources to avoid fraudsters. Since then, Attorney General Moody has issued approximately 90 Consumer Alerts. Last year, as COVID-19 began to spread in Florida, Attorney General Moody quickly revamped the warning system to focus on virus-related scams—issuing more than 20 COVID-19 specific warnings to date.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "As COVID-19 started to change the way we worked, learned and socialized, scammers quickly adapted to hatch new schemes designed to exploit the pandemic and people's desire to stay healthy. To stay ahead of these fraudsters, I quickly activated Florida's Price Gouging Hotline, assembled our Rapid Response Team and shifted our Consumer Alert Program to address

emerging, virus-related scams in real-time.

“As we recognize National Consumer Protection Week, I want to remind Floridians, and more importantly scammers, that our work is not over. We continue to warn about emerging virus-related scams and investigate information provided to our office related to scams and fraudsters.”

Behavior Health Analyst Arrested for Medicaid Fraud



Attorney General Ashley Moody’s Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Martin County Sheriff’s Office arrested a behavior health analyst for defrauding the Florida Medicaid program out of thousands of dollars. Chenelle Weaver, employed by Behavior Basics, Inc., provided behavioral health services to Medicaid recipients in St. Lucie County. However, not only did Weaver fail to provide services, the defendant fraudulently charged the Florida Medicaid program thousands of dollars.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, “This fraudster schemed and manipulated her way into gaining thousands of taxpayer dollars, all while leaving a Medicaid patient without essential care. It is infuriating that a medical professional trusted to provide care for Floridians would exploit a patient to line their own pockets. My office will continue to aggressively pursue these fraudulent schemes and hold those involved accountable.” Read More



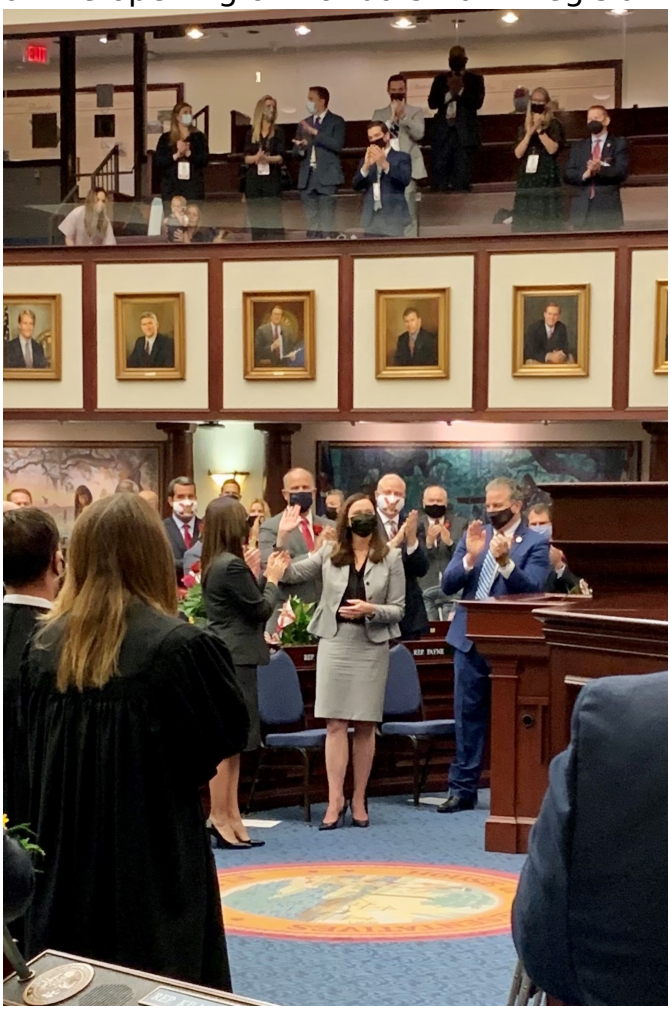
Attorney

General Ashley Moody's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit and the Miami-Dade Police Department arrested a dental hygienist illegally practicing as an unlicensed dentist for committing Medicaid fraud. Julio Suarez allegedly preformed unlicensed and unauthorized procedures on patients, defrauding the Medicaid program out of more than $8,000.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "It is utterly despicable that a health care professional would knowingly deceive trusting patients about their licenses and credentials in order to practice unlawful dental procedures. To further use that deception to scam the Medicaid program out of thousands of taxpayer dollars is inexcusable and criminal. I am proud of my Medicaid Fraud Control Unit for investigating these crimes and putting an end to this illegal dental scheme." Read More

Events

This week, Attorney General Ashley Moody attended the State of the State Address at the opening of Florida’s 2021 Legislative Session.



Attorney General Moody with the first Florida House Law Enforcement Officer of the Day, St. Petersburg Police Department Detective Anthony Peterson.



Attorney General Moody with state Sen. Tom Wright, Volusia County law enforcement officers and police K-9s at a news conference in Daytona Beach, presenting a new bill protecting police K-9s injured in the line of duty.

