



THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
EASTERN DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Eastern District of Louisiana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday, March 23, 2020

## **U.S. Attorney urges the public to report suspected COVID-19 fraud**

### **Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Rivera Appointed as Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator**

**NEW ORLEANS** – U.S. Attorney Peter G. Strasser of the District of Louisiana today urged the public to report suspected fraud schemes related to COVID-19 (the Coronavirus) by calling the National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) hotline (1-866-720-5721) or to the NCDF e-mail address [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov).

In coordination with the Department of Justice, Attorney General William Barr has directed U.S. Attorneys to prioritize the investigation and prosecution of Coronavirus fraud schemes.

“Along with our federal, state and local law enforcement partners, we continue to stand ready to enforce the laws of the United States and to address the public safety needs of our community”, said U.S. Attorney Peter G. Strasser. “Unfortunately, during times of crisis, criminals continue their efforts to victimize the public. However, we are ready for them. To assist with the Department of Justice COVID-19 strategy, I have appointed Assistant U.S. Attorney (AUSA) Edward Rivera, a seasoned federal prosecutor, as our district’s COVID-19 Fraud Coordinator. AUSA Rivera will serve as the district’s legal counsel on COVID-19 fraud related matters and will participate in the prosecution of coronavirus fraud cases. AUSA Rivera will also conduct public outreach activities relating to COVID-19 fraud schemes. The public should know that the Department of Justice, joined by its state and local law enforcement partners, will vigorously pursue all those who violate federal law and prey upon our citizens in the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Some examples of these schemes include:

- Individuals and businesses selling fake cures for COVID-19 online and engaging in other forms of fraud.
- Phishing emails from entities posing as the World Health Organization or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Malicious websites and apps that appear to share Coronavirus-related information to gain and lock access to your devices until payment is received.
- Seeking donations fraudulently for illegitimate or non-existent charitable organizations.
- Medical providers obtaining patient information for COVID-19 testing and then using that information to fraudulently bill for other tests and procedures.

In a memorandum to U.S. Attorneys issued March 19, Deputy Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen also directed each U.S. Attorney to appoint a Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator to serve as the legal counsel for the federal judicial district on matters relating to the Coronavirus, direct the prosecution of Coronavirus-related crimes, and to conduct outreach and awareness activities. The Eastern District of Louisiana Coronavirus Fraud Coordinator is Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Rivera.

The NCDF can receive and enter complaints into a centralized system that can be accessed by all U.S. Attorneys, as well as Justice Department litigating and law enforcement components to identify, investigate and prosecute fraud schemes. The NCDF coordinates complaints with 16 additional federal law enforcement agencies, as well as state Attorneys General and local authorities.

To find more about Department of Justice resources and information, please visit [www.justice.gov/coronavirus](http://www.justice.gov/coronavirus).

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**Topic(s):**

Disaster Fraud

Coronavirus Fraud

**Component(s):**

Office of the Attorney General

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